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the SHADOW

INFORMATION IS STRENGTH • KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

TRUMP LOST. VOTE SUPPRESSION WON. HERE ARE THE NUMBERS.

By Greg Palast

[January 24, 2025] Trump lost. That is, if all legal voters were allowed to vote, if all legal ballots were counted, Trump would have lost the states of Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Georgia. Vice-President Kamala Harris would have won the Presidency with 286 electoral votes.

And, if not for the mass purge of voters of color, if not for the mass disqualification of provisional and mail-in ballots, if not for the new mass "vigilante" challenges in swing states, Harris would have gained at least another 3,565,000 votes, topping Trump's official popular vote tally by 1.2 million.

Stay with me and I'll give you the means, methods and, most important, the key calculations.

But if you're expecting a sexy story about Elon Musk messing with vote-counting software from outer space, sorry, you won't get that here.

As in Bush v. Gore in 2000 and in too many other miscarriages of Democracy, this election was determined by good old "vote suppression," the polite term we use for shafting people of color out of their ballot. We used to call it Jim Crow.

Here are key numbers:

- 4,776,706 voters were wrongly purged from voter rolls, according to US Elections Assistance Commission data.
- By August of 2024, for the first time since 1946, self-proclaimed "vigilante" voter-fraud hunters challenged the rights of 317,886 voters. The NAACP of Georgia estimates that by Election Day, the challenges exceeded 200,000 in Georgia alone.
- No fewer than 2,121,000 mail-in ballots were disqualified for minor clerical errors (e.g. postage due).
- At least 585,000 ballots cast in-precinct were also disqualified.
- 1,216,000 "provisional" ballots were rejected, not counted.
- 3.24 million new registrations were rejected or not entered on the rolls in time to vote.

If the purges, challenges and ballot rejections were random, it wouldn't matter. It's anything but random. For example, an audit by the State of Washington found that a Black voter was 400% more likely than a white voter to have their mail-in ballot rejected. Rejection of Black in-person votes, according to a US Civil Rights Commission study in Florida, ran 14.3% or one in seven ballots cast.

There are also the uncountable effects of the explosive growth of voter intimidation tactics including the bomb threats that closed 31 polling stations in Atlanta on Election Day.

America's Nasty Little Secret

The nasty little secret of American democracy is that we don't count all the votes. Nor let every citizen vote.

In 2024, especially, after an avalanche of new not-going-to-let-you-vote laws passed in almost every red state, the number of citizens Jim Crow'd out of their vote soared into the millions. According to the Brennan Center for Justice, since the 2020 election, "At least 30 states enacted 78 restrictive laws" to blockade voting. The race-targeted laws ran the gamut from shuttering drop boxes in Black-majority cities to, for the first time, allowing non-government self-appointed "vote fraud vigilantes" to challenge voters by the hundreds of thousands.

Throughout election seasons, The New York Times and NPR and establishment media write stories and editorials decrying vote suppression tactics, from new ID requirements to new restrictions on mail-in voting. But, notably, the mainstream press never, ever, not once, will say that these ugly racist attacks on voters changed the outcome of an election.

Question: If these vote suppression laws—notorious example: Georgia's SB 202—had no effect on election outcomes, then why did GOP legislators fight so hard to pass these laws? The answer is clear on the Brennan Center's map of states that passed restrictive laws. It's pretty much Trump's victory map.

America Goes Postal

Let's look at just one vote suppression operation in action.

In 2020, during the pandemic, America went postal. More than 43% of us voted by mail.

But it wasn't easy. Harris County, Texas, home of Houston, tried to mail out ballots during the covid epidemic on the grounds that voters shouldn't die waiting in lines at polling stations. But then, the state's Republican Attorney General Ken Paxton stopped this life-saving measure.

Why wouldn't this GOP official let Houstonians vote safely? Maybe it's because Houston has the largest number of Black voters of any city in America. Indeed, on [chief executive officer of Trump's 2016 presidential campaign] Steve Bannon's podcast, Paxton proudly stated, "Had we not done that [stopped Houston from sending out ballots], Donald Trump would've lost the election" in Texas. Texas!

Before the 2024 election, prompted by Trump's evidence-free attack on mail-in ballots as inherently fraudulent, 22 states, according to the Brennan Center, imposed "38 new restrictions on the ability to vote absentee that were not in place in 2020… likely to most affect or already have disproportionately affected voters of color." You're shocked, right?

Texas' requirement to add ID numbers to an absentee ballot caused the rejection rate to jump from 1% to 12%.

So, here's the question we need to ask. If restrictions on mail-in balloting swung Texas to Trump, how did all these new restrictions affect the outcome of the vote in other states?

In 2020, an NPR [National Public Radio] study found the mail-in ballot rejection rate hit 13.8% during the Democratic primaries—a loss of one in seven ballots.

Take Georgia, where the Palast Investigative Fund spent months in on-the-ground investigations. Career military officer and Pentagon advisor Major Gamaliel Turner (Ret), demonstrated for young voters how to fill out an absentee ballot, emphasizing that it must be mailed in promptly. He did, seven days before the deadline. But we only recently learned that Georgia officials disqualified his ballot as received too late.

In 2008, even before the majority of Democrats began voting by mail, when absentee balloting was much rarer, the federal government reported 488,136 mail-in ballots were rejected, almost all on picayune grounds (i.e. middle initial on signature missing etc.). An MIT [military research contractor Massachusetts Institute of Technology] study put the number of rejected mail-in ballots at 2.9%.

That's the low-end of MIT's estimate of mail-in ballots tossed out. Charles Stewart, Distinguished Professor of Political Science, author of the report, notes mail-in ballots requested and never received nor returned could raise the total mail-in ballot loss rate to 21%.

For 2024, that would total 14.1 million ballots that, effectively, vanished from the count.

The "failure to return" ballot was exacerbated in this election by the steep cut in ballot drop boxes, a method favored by urban (read, "Democratic") voters. Black voters in Atlanta used ballot drop boxes extensively because they feared, with good reason, relying on the Post Office.

In response, the Republican Governor of Georgia, Brian Kemp, signed SB 202, which slashed the number of drop boxes by 75% only in Black-majority counties and locked them away at night. These moves slashed mail-in and drop box balloting, used by the majority of Democrats in 2020, by nearly 90% in the 2024 race.

Even if deemed "on time," ballots still face rejection. Marietta, Georgia, first-time voter Andrian Consonery Jr. told me his mail-in ballot was rejected because his signature supposedly didn't match that on his registration. (I needn't add, Consonery is Black.) In effect, Consonery was accused of forgery—a federal crime--not by the FBI, but by self-appointed amateur sleuths. This challenge to mail-in ballots, part of a right-wing campaign, has gone viral.

In 2020, the federal government reported that 157,477 ballots were rejected for supposedly "mis-matched" signatures. That's quite a crime wave—but without criminals.

And that's before we get to the dozens of other attacks on voting that were freshly minted for the 2024 election, attacks aimed at voters of color.

The crucial statistic is that not everyone's ballot gets disqualified. One study done for the United States Civil Rights Commission found that a Black person, such as Major Turner, will be 900% more likely to have their mail-in or in-person ballot disqualified than a white voter.

Now, let's do some arithmetic. If we

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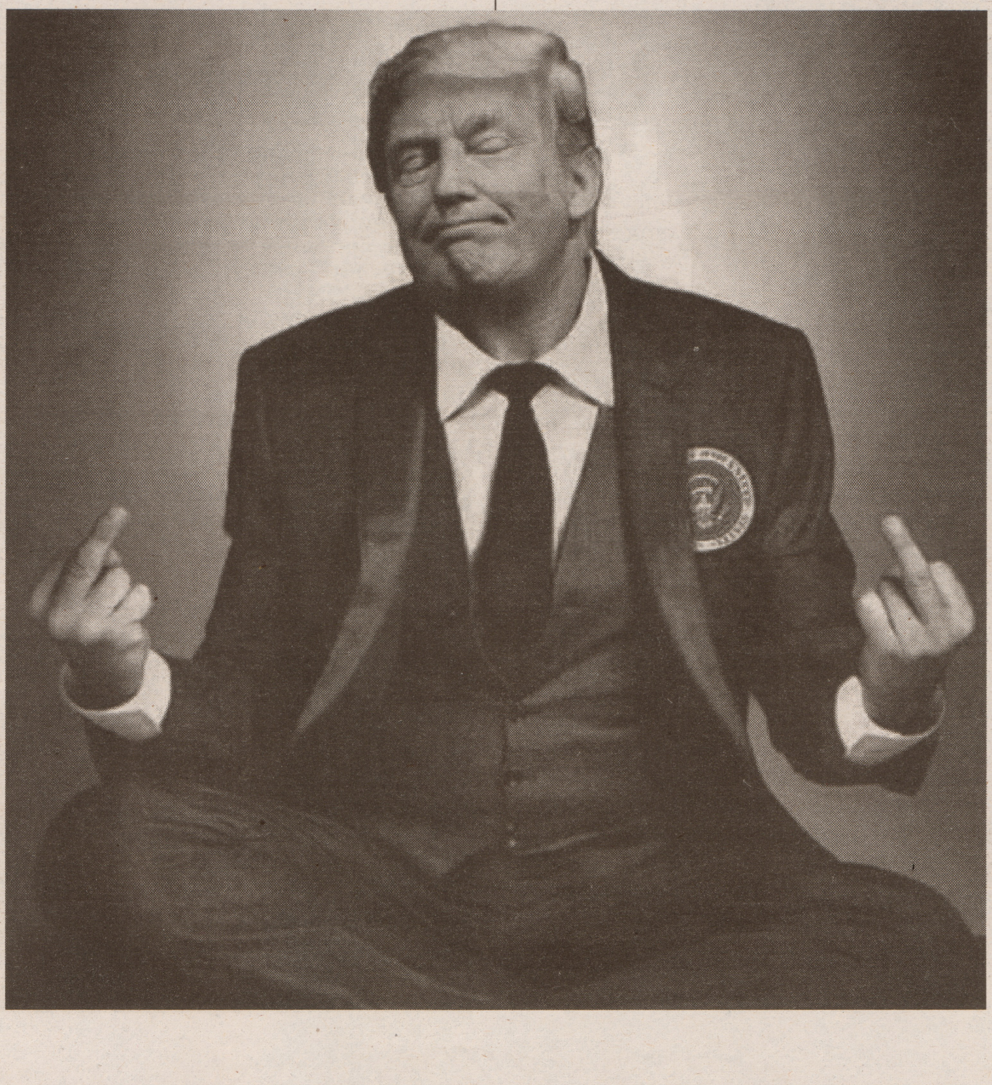


SHADOW EDITORIALS

AFTER THE ELECTION

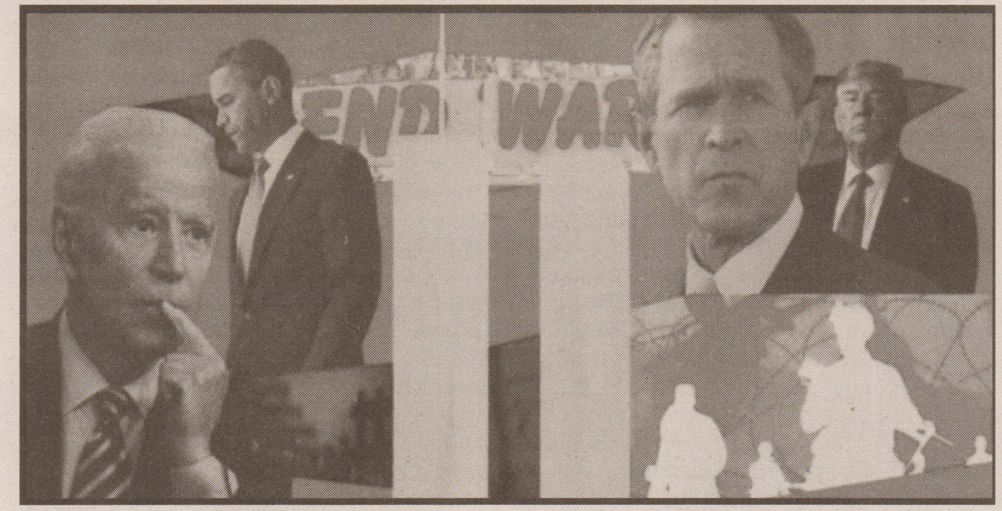
By Caitlin Johnstone

Democrats are as happy as a pig in shit right now. Suddenly they get to pretend all the unfathomable evils their president inflicted upon our world never happened, just because there's a different president doing bad things who people are feeling big feels about.

They wanted to lose. They're overjoyed that they don't have to be the face on the US empire's depravity anymore, and that it's no longer their job to make excuses for it. They're getting everything they want out of the present arrangement, because liberals don't actually care about fixing problems and making the world a better place, they only care about feeling good about themselves. Their politics is never actually about anything other than their feelings, and Biden was making their feelings feel bad. Trump lets them feel smug and vindicated and correct. He also lets them feel outraged and indignant, and they enjoy that too.

But it's all bullshit. No matter what Trump says or does or how he and his goons make people's feelings feel, it will still be a historical fact that Biden and his handlers spent 15 months facilitating a campaign of extermination and demolition in Gaza which could not have happened without US backing. It will still be a historical fact that Biden and his handlers pushed Ukraine into an unwinnable war that the US and its allies knowingly provoked in order to advance geostrategic grand chessboard agendas, sabotaging potential peace negotiations and threatening the world with nuclear annihilation along the way. It will still be a historical fact that Biden kept in place many of the ugly policies put in place during the first Trump administration and actively expanded and added to them.

It's important to point this out because Democrats are posturing as opponents of tyranny and abuse right now, and they aren't. They are ALLIES of tyranny and abuse, who LARP as righteous defenders of truth and justice whenever the other tyrannical and abusive party happens to be in power. Their behavior during the Trump administration shows you how they wish to be perceived, but their behavior during the Biden administration showed you who they really are.



BUSH, OBAMA AND BIDEN GAVE TRUMP THE TOOLS FOR REPRESSION

Donald Trump is thought of as a terrible president who doesn't care about humanity. While that assertion is true, he had lots of help from his like-minded predecessors in developing plans for war and other criminality.

What is inauthentic opposition?

It's disturbing to see the Ruling Class pretend to be horrified by Donald J. Trump's presidency, when they themselves handed him dictatorial powers, the largest military empire in history with more than 750 foreign military bases, the authority to wage war, mass surveillance & censorship, and most of all legalized bribery that has corrupted our Politicians and overthrown our Republic.

The United States was ranked 55th in the world for Press Freedom under Joe Biden. Kamala Harris campaigned with Liz Cheney, who voted with President Donald J. Trump 93% of the time they both were in Office & supports her father's evil catastrophic wars & Genocide in Gaza.

What kind of nation is constantly talking about who they will attack next? War is mass murder. The United States Government is Mordor.

Cory Booker, NPR, Harvard University, David Brooks & the Wall Street Warmongering Democrats aren't on our side. They are the folks who sold us to Trump & the GOP.

Corporate State Media defends the Ruling Class; they don't question them. They sell wars like it's mouthwash. They won't tell us the facts about NATO, Trump's efforts to increase undocumented immigration, the Houthis/Ansarallah protest of Genocidal Israel, or that Reaganomics/Wall Street Feudalism moved our factories abroad. The number of elected governments our politicians have overthrown or who our real enemies are.

We are surrounded by enemies on all sides & it's difficult to ascertain who can be trusted & what the truth is.

Chris Hedges said more than ten years ago, after bearing witness to the lawlessness of George W. Bush & Barack Obama, that there are no checks on the power of the President. Our democratic institutions have been corrupted & neutered by Oligarchs & multinational businesses.

We need to rally behind an opposition Party. Democrats are not that.

A nationwide movement against not just Trump, but the Ruling Class as a whole.

-- Margaret Kimberley
[Black Agenda Report]

CONTROL

By James Spione

The brilliance of modern American fascism is that it comes in different flavors.

The Republicans have their preferred set of authoritarian measures, which we see unfolding right now– seething hostility/harsh policies towards immigrants, undermining government assistance to vulnerable populations, blatantly lopsided fiscal policy favoring the wealthy, advancing war and conflict overseas, and stomping out protests and free speech (under the veil of "fighting antisemitism" or "combating terrorism," depending on the press release).

Their tough-guy style has reached its apex in the person of Donald Trump, who is relentlessly portrayed in the media as some sort of Hitler-like aberration in American politics, but whose actions are completely congruent with past GOP policies, from Reagan's tax code and animosity towards government regulation to George W. Bush's Constitution-shredding War on Terror and its broad assault on citizens' rights.

Meanwhile, the Democratic Party has their own preferred set of herd management mechanisms: They envision a technocratic Rule of the Experts, where a handful of super-credentialed scientists and doctors and other bureaucrats, ensconced in corrupt positions of centralized power, get to tell everyone else how to live.

The Dems adore ideologically driven crusades that also rely on authoritarian, top-down enforcement structures, such as forcing people to take experimental medical treatments in the name of "public health" or lose their jobs and be cast out of society. The Party has pushed increasingly dubious top-down "solutions" to combat climate change (many of which are environmental disasters, such as enormous precious metal mining operations on indigenous lands to create batteries for electric cars), and of course, this being an Empire, they also advocate war and conflict overseas—although this can occasionally be a different set of wars.

And yes, just like the GOP, when push comes to shove, the Democrats will aggressively stomp out protests and restrain free speech—under the Biden Administration, for instance, a nationwide crackdown on Gaza protests rolled out in the spring of 2024, and during the pandemic an enormous state-sponsored censorship regime was constructed in close coordination with the tech giants to "combat misinformation" and "protect people from harm." Democrats cling to their precious propaganda mantras with holy fervor and are every bit as hostile to those who dissent from their policies and worldview as Republicans.

As administrations change, the federal government switches back and forth between these two control-obsessed factions, which, in the name of "protecting America" (but really to satisfy their bottomless need for obedience and conformity) inflict their preferred mechanisms of control on the psychologically-whiplashed populace, all the while decrying the other faction's methods as "dangerous" and "anti-American."

With so much power now held by the Presidency, the new Chief Executive moves swiftly to dismantle the other side's fascistic controls whilst rapidly implementing their own. But the important thing for the system as a whole is that the public is always kept off-balance and on the defensive, wondering what the next set of authoritarian measures is and how to navigate it—while of course, being incredibly divided amongst themselves ideologically.

Tragically and predictably, each side of the thoroughly-brainwashed American citizenry enthusiastically assists in the ongoing erosion of our Constitutional rights by cheering on the authoritarian assault when their own side does it, either totally unaware of, or just not caring about the inherent cognitive dissonance as they switch positions on bedrock issues. So for instance, a lot of the very same folks who railed about rampant censorship during the pandemic now vehemently support the crushing of civil liberties on college campuses; the group that is decrying this current attack on dissent at our universities very recently thought aggressively censoring and deplatforming dissenting professionals (or anyone else who questioned official policy) during Covid was a most excellent idea. Both sides pontificate and claim moral high ground, and yet both are aiding and abetting the overall ongoing destruction of our civil liberties at the whim of whatever faction happens to be in charge.

So, although it appears on the surface there is this great partisan political struggle going on in the US, in truth, the ruling class is united in their need to inflict a set of strong authoritarian controls on the public at all times, by whichever means are best suited to each faction, while behind the scenes, they collude and collaborate on siphoning wealth and resources upwards into fewer and fewer hands at home, and carrying on endless wars and destruction overseas.

We will never vote our way out of this cage.

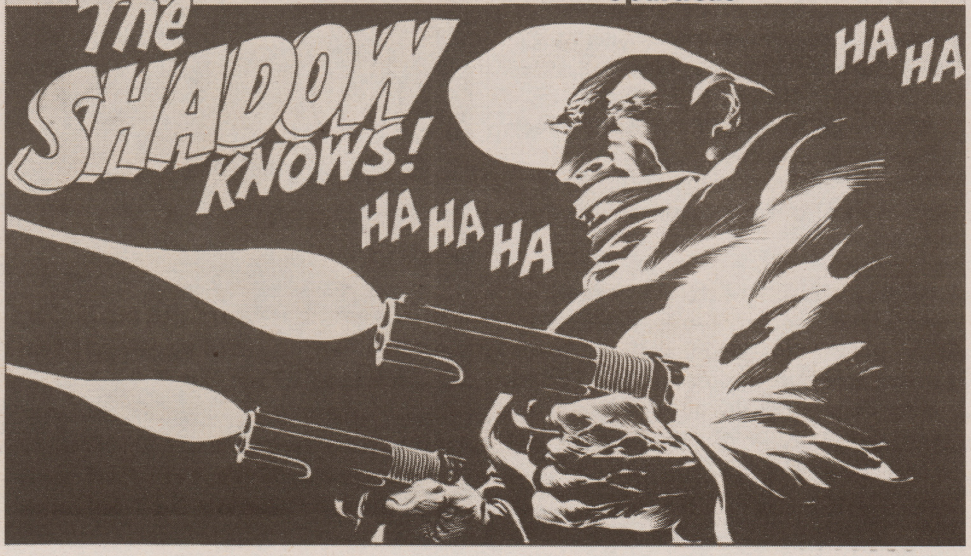
THE DEMS INSTALLED TRUMP

How? By not giving us universal health care when they had all three branches in Dem hands. By not increasing the minimum wage for over 10 years when they could have. But most of all, the Dems installed Trump, as planned, by not running a competitive primary with a viable candidate, and installing unpopular Harris to run. She announced her campaign was about "JOY!" to a country where over half live paycheck-to-paycheck and will never be able to retire. The obvious response was FUCK YOU.

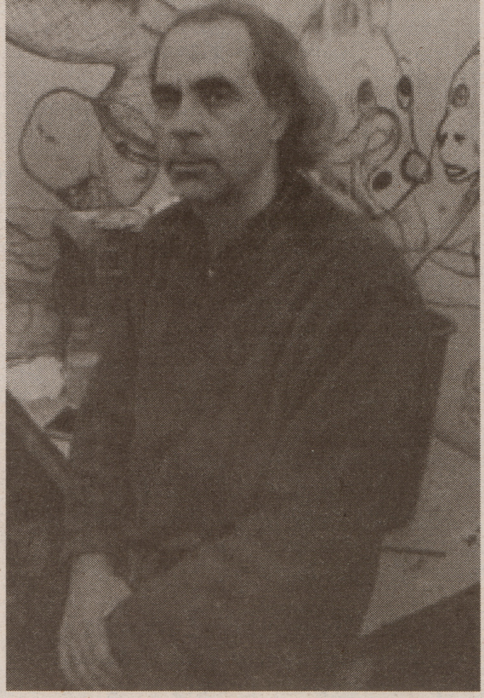
The Uniparty works for the globalist eugenicists, and the Dems helped them achieve their one essential control device - the digital ID required more and more to travel, work, etc. Dems did this by opening the border, and claiming election fraud.

Keep playing the partisan illusion, and the billionaires will own you."

-- Sparticus



STEVEN ENGLANDER: 1961-2024



Steven Englander, longtime director of anarchist collective ABC No Rio, passed away on December 12, 2024, due to lung failure.

Located in a city-owned former tenement building at 156 Rivington Street, ABC No Rio came about as a result of a group of artists and community activists breaking into and occupying a former factory showroom at 123 Delancey Street on December 30, 1979, for a "tactical occupation" art exhibition and event called "The Real Estate Show" that opened on January 1, 1980. The show featured 35 artists' representations of the real estate industry and the city's real estate planning process, addressing neighborhood arson, local alternate energy proposals and the media blackout on what the city was doing to low-income neighborhoods, through drawings, montages, cartoons and architectural mock-ups.

After tense negotiations following the city's department of "Housing Preservation and Development" [HPD] padlocking the building, a deal was cut, by which the city agreed to offer the artists a different city-owned building. After searching several alternative sites in the neighborhood, the group ultimately took the Rivington Street building.

The name "ABC No Rio" derives from the remaining letters of a mostly burnt-out neon sign in the front window of the building. It had read "Abogado Con Notario," meaning "Lawyer and Notary Public" in Spanish.

From 1980 through 2016, ABC No Rio (called "No Rio" for short) provided a venue for art shows, performance art, legendary punk shows and open mike nights on the lower floors, with a library, photo lab, and silk screening and computer rooms on the upper floors. In addition, No Rio provided facilities for Food Not Bombs, which, to this day, continues to serve nutritional meals in Tompkins Square Park on Sunday afternoons.

In 1980, Steven moved to New York City from Racine, Wisconsin, where he grew up, in order to study film at New York University. On the Lower East Side, he connected with activist and intellectual groups that included Black Eye zine, the Libertarian Book Club and the Anarchist Switchboard. In 1987, through Matthew Courtney's Wide-Open Cabaret performances. Steven was turned on to ABC No Rio, where he would participate in Courtney's open mike nights.

After two temporary stints, Steven assumed the position as director of No Rio in 1994. In 1995, he met activist, writer, photographer and fellow No Rio member Victoria Law, with whom he had a daughter.

In 1997, the city agreed to sell the building to the ABC No Rio collective for a token $1.00, provided that the group raise funds to bring the building up to code and that squatters living in the upper floors vacate. On June 29, 2006, the city completed the proposed sale, under the provision that the group raise money for the renovation.

In July 2016, when renovation was deemed impractical, the building was demolished. Under Steven's directorship; No Rio raised funds to construct a new building designed by architect Paul Castrucci.

In July 2024, ground was finally broken to erect a new building. Steven proudly visited the site repeatedly, happy to have lived to see the new ABC No Rio emerging from the footprint of the old No Rio. The new building is expected to be completed in January 2026. In an interview, Victoria Law said: "I think that's a testament to his willpower … and he held on long enough for that groundbreaking to happen, to keep going. This was his life's work."

-- Chris Flash

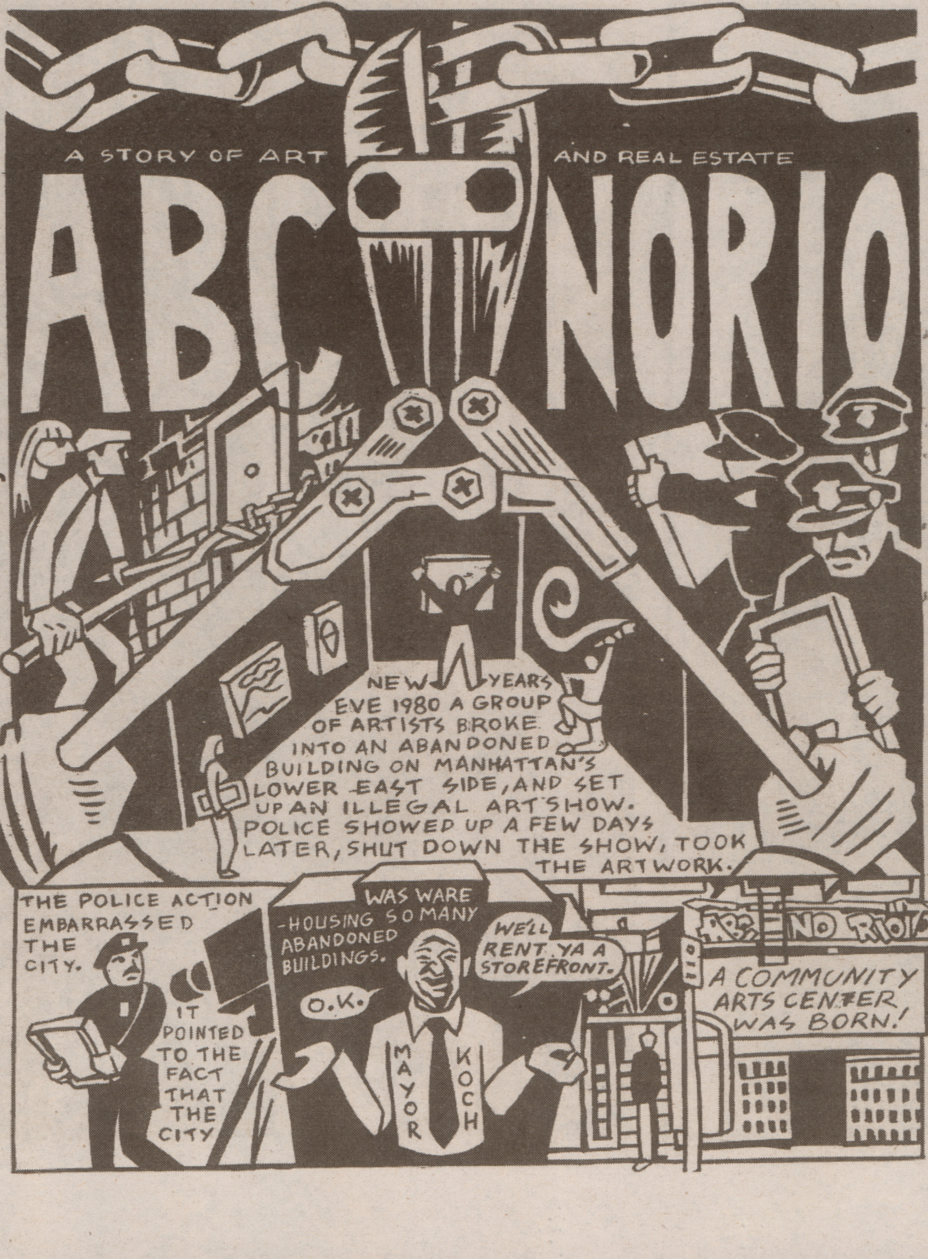

A STORY OF ART
AND REAL ESTATE
ABC NORIO
NEW YEARS EVE 1980 A GROUP OF ARTISTS BROKE INTO AN ABANDONED BUILDING ON MANHATTAN'S LOWER EAST SIDE, AND SET UP AN ILLEGAL ART SHOW. POLICE SHOWED UP A FEW DAYS LATER, SHUT DOWN THE SHOW, TOOK THE ARTWORK.
THE POLICE ACTION EMBARRASSED THE CITY.
IT POINTED TO THE FACT THAT THE CITY
WAS WARE-HOUSING SO MANY ABANDONED BUILDINGS.
O.K.
WE'LL RENT YA A STOREFRONT.
MAYOR KOCH
ABC NO RIO
A COMMUNITY ARTS CENTER WAS BORN!

Illustration by Seth Tobocman

PAUL BAKIJA: 1964-2024

Paul "Cripple" Bakija passed away from cancer on September 21, 2024. He was the founding member and guitarist of the influential hardcore punk rock band REAGAN YOUTH, active from 1980 to 1989, and then again from 2006 until his death.

Formed alongside his friend and classmate Dave "Insurgent" Rubinstein while attending Forest Hills High School, Reagan Youth quickly became a staple in the early New York punk scene, performing at legendary venues like CBGB. Known for their anarchist, socialist, and anti-racist themes, the band used irony and provocative imagery, like Ku Klux Klan and Nazi symbols, to criticize the politics of the Reagan administration and the rise of the Christian Right. Their song "Reagan Youth" drew comparisons between Reagan supporters and the Hitler Youth, reflecting the band's fiercely left-wing stance. Throughout the 1980s, Paul and Reagan Youth toured extensively, releasing two albums: Volumes One and Two. Despite critical success within the hardcore punk scene, by the time Ronald Reagan left office in 1989, they disbanded.

Following the breakup, Paul remained musically active, working with Dave Insurgent, bassist Chris Simunek, and drummer Javier Madriaga, on a psychedelic rock project called HOUSE OF GOD. Paul's playing evolved over the years from fast, raw hardcore to a more experimental style, incorporating intricate guitar solos and overdubs. By the time Reagan Youth's second album was released in 1990, the band's sound had drawn comparisons to Black Sabbath and other classic rock influences.

In 1993, Dave Insurgent tragically took his own life after the deaths of his girlfriend Tiffany Bresciani and his mother Giza Rubinstein - they had died three days apart. Bakija reformed Reagan Youth in 2006, leading to new recordings and several tours in the U.S. and Europe. Despite various lineup changes, Paul remained the constant driving force behind the band. It was during this period that Paul was also playing with vocalist Beatrice Demesier in the band DUST ANGEL, in addition to their side project "MADAME ST. BEATRICE." In 2023, Reagan Youth began recording Volume Three with Beatrice and drummer Mark Zapata. A concept album on the life and times of Dave Insurgent, it was completed in 2024 as Paul was in hospice care at Calvary Hospital in the Bronx.

Paul's work with Reagan Youth left an enduring mark on the punk rock community. His activism against political oppression and bigotry remains influential today. Rest in Power, Paul Cripple.

-- The Reagan Youth Family

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THE NYC "CONGESTION PRICING" TAX SCAM

In 2019, New York State governor Andrew Cuomo and New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio agreed to implement a "congestion pricing" toll scheme in NYC, allegedly to reduce street traffic, while raising funds for MTA [Metropolitan Transit Authority] projects, despite the scheme being killed by the New York State Assembly in 2009. Federal officials under then-president Biden approved the new toll tax in June 2023. In November 2024, Cuomo's successor Kathy Hochul implemented the tax, which took effect in January 2025. Both she and current New York City mayor Eric Adams have been trying to push the new toll tax on us since each got into office. In February, the USDOT [United States Dept of Transportation], under newly-seated president Trump, revoked federal approval, demanding an end to the toll tax by March, though the tax remains in effect, pending the outcome of a court challenge brought by the state of New York.

Here is a great analytical breakdown on the causes and effects of congestion in our city from Brooklyn resident Allan Rosen, a former Director of Bus Planning for the MTA. Now retired, he has over 30 years of experience in transportation. He can be reached on X @BrooklynBus.

YOU MADE A TRAFFIC AND YOU CHARGE THE TOLL. Here's how..

Step 1. Manufactured Congestion

- Parking Scarcity by Design: Overdevelopment increases the need for parking. Municipal parking lots are replaced with buildings increasing demand while eliminating parking spaces. Next, abolish parking requirements for new developments, ensuring even less availability.
- Vanishing Parking Spaces: CitiBike docks, dining sheds, bus lanes and garbage bins swallow up parking, removing perhaps a hundred thousand spaces. Some bus lanes are in effect when they are not needed. There are fewer parking garages and future vacant sites to be developed no longer are turned into temporary parking lots offering relief. They eliminate more than the required number of parking spaces for daylighting. Fewer spaces mean driving longer to find one.
- Open Streets Chaos: The city Department of Transportation closes streets permanently or temporarily, diverting traffic to already congested streets and disrupting bus service.
- Shrinking Lanes: The DOT further reduces road capacity by eliminating many traffic lanes on major streets with 24-hour bus lanes, bike paths, pedestrian island and planter installations, or simply striping them off. Turning restrictions force you to drive further.
- Unchecked Double Parking: Deliveries clog streets with no regulations requiring off-peak hours, as other major cities have.
- Ride-Share Saturation: For-hire vehicles flood streets unchecked, accounting for over half of passenger cars in congestion zones.
- Slowed Traffic Flow: Speed limits drop on arterial roads turning them into local streets. Green lights are shortened, and throughput at intersections is reduced. These changes are made in the name of "safety," but instead slow emergency response times and paradoxically increase accidents and result in more fatalities.
- Signal Sabotage: Unnecessary all-way stop signs and traffic signals, deliberately misaligned traffic lights, signals in front of schools which do not need to be in effect for 24-hours, slow vehicles further. DOT admits that slowing traffic is one of its goals, again in the name of "safety" which is not even a priority. If it were, lane markings would not be replaced months after they wear out and dark sections of highways would not remain for years.
- E-Bike Anarchy: Unlicensed, uninsured e-bikes and scooters weave dangerously through traffic, unregulated and unchecked by the city. Where they are prevalent, it is prudent to not exceed 15 mph.
- Fewer Traffic Agents: With fewer officials directing traffic, gridlock becomes inevitable.

Step 2: Do Not Increase Public Transit

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority does not increase existing transit frequency, make it more widespread or more reliable. (They recently announced extra service on seven Brooklyn routes, but did not indicate the amount of the increase or if service is being reduced on other routes to compensate.) Instead, they reduce the number of bus stops to make buses less accessible. They falsely claim buses will move faster because of this. They do not reopen subway entrances closed 50 years ago (when conditions were very different) to increase accessibility. Yet they expect 11% more people to use the subways and less people to drive without increasing subway or bus capacity.

Step 3: Mismanaged Transit Funds Compound The Problem

- Congestion pricing money goes to the MTA, a model of inefficiency, which has the highest subway construction costs in the world;
- An agency that constantly raises fares and tolls makes no attempts to end the inequities of double fares and expect drivers to pay for fare beaters;
- An agency that is full of waste and makes poor decisions. NYC Transit and MTA Bus have not been combined after 20 years. That would reduce wasteful non-revenue bus mileage, which is now perhaps ten times what it was fifty years ago. Buses used to return to the depot every 48 hours only to refuel and for maintenance. Now they make trips back and forth to the depot with each change of shift every eight hours and no longer carry passengers on these partial trips. Their decision to lease their main headquarters at 2 Broadway for 99 years rather than purchase it outright was scandalous because they still had to pay for all renovations.
- An agency that does not take advantage of funding opportunities. Why have there not been any ads inside buses for the past 40 years? What happened to its Employee Suggestion Programs that used to save tens of millions of dollars annually? One simple procedural change can save up to $100,000 annually.
- The MTA seeks to increase non-revenue bus miles rather than decrease it, believing it is more efficient to operate buses without passengers than with them because the busses can travel faster when empty. They have completely lost sight of why they exist in the first place, to serve the public.
- Service reductions are made because the MTA believes their primary mission is to improve its bottom line. Bus stops are removed, making transit less accessible, while direct routes become time-consuming transfers under "Bus Network Redesigns."
- Bus Network Redesigns reduce in-revenue mileage. Instead of filling service gaps and reducing the number of transit deserts to make transit more accessible and reducing passenger trip times to attract more passengers and trips, which should be the real goals of these studies, trip times are increased. In at least one instance, a direct ten-minute bus trip will become a 45-minute indirect two-bus trip if the MTA does not modify or abandon a proposal which they call an improvement. They refuse to publicize their Bus Network Redesign studies on the buses or at bus shelters, resulting in fewer than one percent of the bus riders being aware of them.

The Ripple Effects

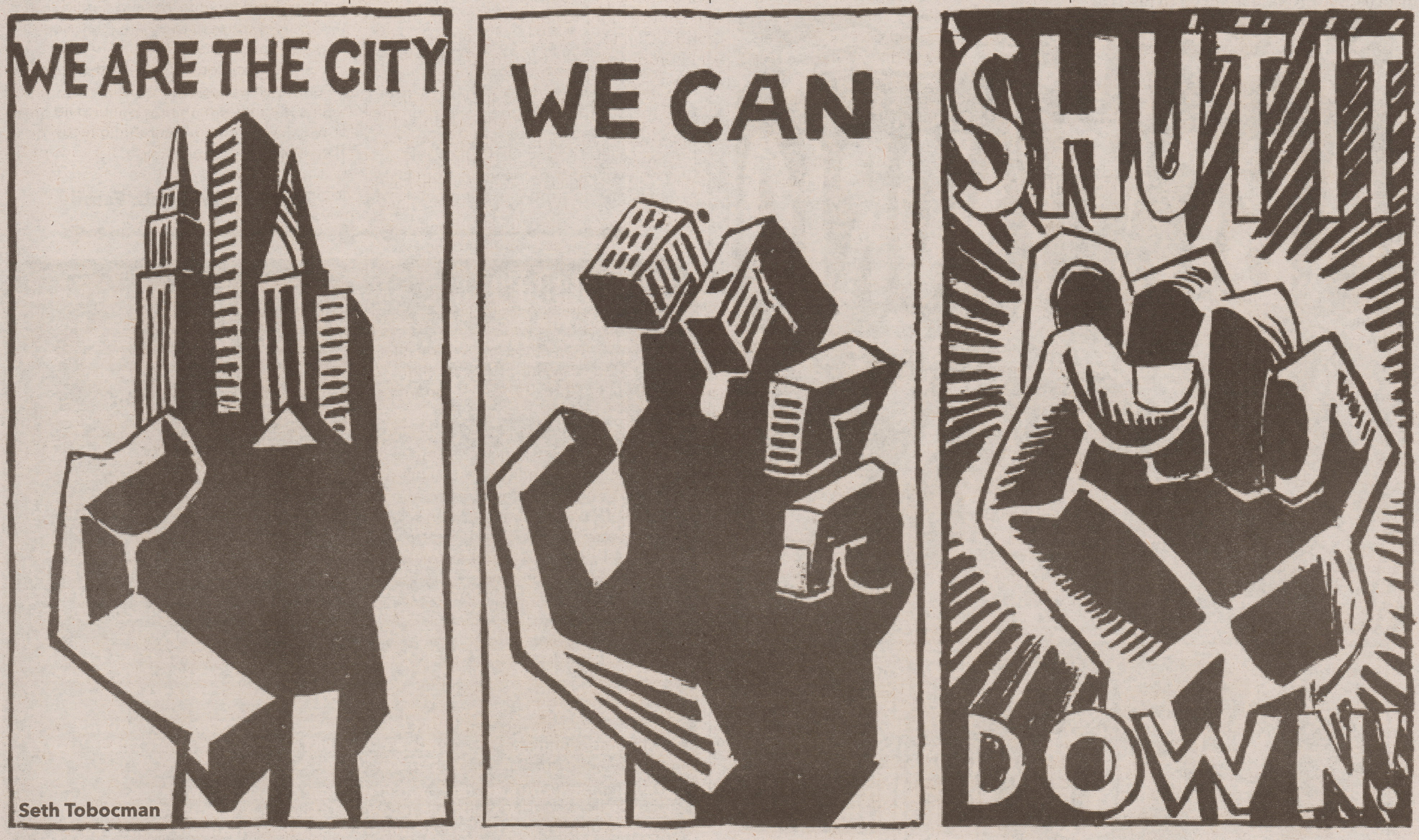
Drivers pay the price—not just financially, but in time and frustration—while businesses and consumers bear the economic burden. Congestion pricing merely moves the congestion from one place to another, for example from the FDR to the BQE.

The Solution

Before demanding more money from drivers, the DOT and MTA need to:

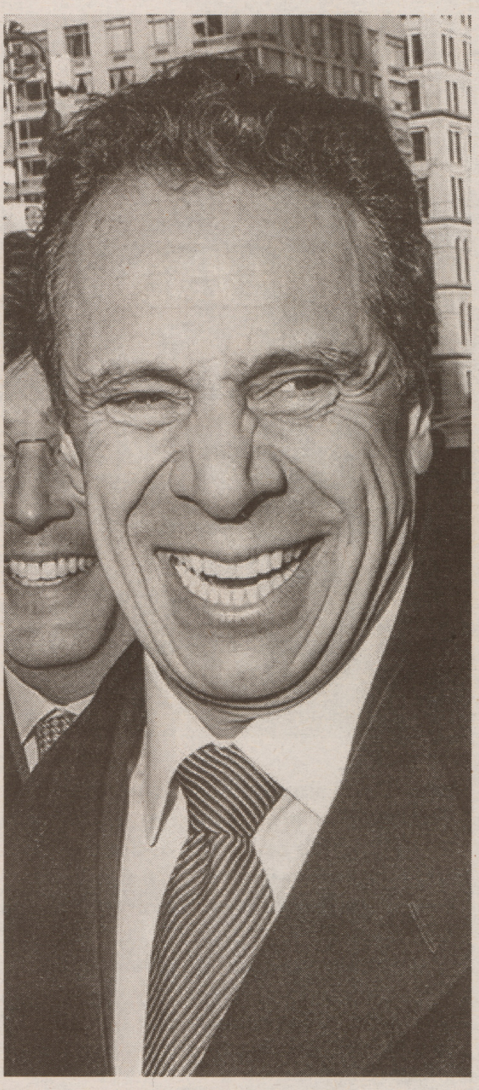
- Change their misguided missions;
- Be honest, transparent, responsive and meaningfully engage with the public;
- Address inefficiencies in transit funding, such as fare beating and operations;
- Invest in improving public transit accessibility, capacity and reliability, not the opposite;
- Stop treating congestion as a problem to profit from and start addressing its root causes.

Congestion Pricing isn't the answer to New York City's self-created traffic nightmare—it's just another tax.



SAY NO TO CUOMO!

By A. Kronstadt



In March, former New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo, forced to resign from office in August 2021 due to sexual harassment and corruption scandals, entered the New York City mayoral race as the anointed candidate of the rich, the "automatic front runner."

None of the corruption and allegations of sexual abuse from 2014 onward, by 11 women who came forward against Cuomo, stopped him from exercising imperial power over us during his term as governor from 2011-2021, including his economically and psychologically crippling COVID lockdown of 2020, the economic effects of which we are still reeling from.

The general principle is that evidence against powerful people is kept in reserve for the moment when it is most convenient for the ruling class to roll it out.

The chain of events that brought Cuomo down were anything but a grassroots groundswell against his privileged overreach. Did any of us get to vote in any kind of recall election? After state Democrats turned against him almost unanimously, he then resigned and went off into a cushy exile for a while. The whole thing was decided not by any democratic process, but in the highest echelons of the ruling rich.

Now Andrew Cuomo, who is currently paying private lawyers to defend himself with taxpayer money, expects to be welcomed back into politics - no longer in Albany, but here in NYC. The Me Too era is over and now it is the age of Trump, Cuomo's fellow imperial octopus whose tentacles have probed up every skirt and down every bodice. It is no longer the era of the politically correct, but the era of the player, and the players see in Cuomo a reliable one of their own.

Those who created and flooded Cuomo's Super Political Action Committee [PAC] "Fix the City" with "contributions" since March 2025 include:

- Hudson Yards developer and Miami Dolphins owner Stephen Ross: $50,000.
- Billionaire construction tycoon John Fish, responsible for the condo conversion of the old Waldorf Astoria hotel: $250,000.
- RFR Realty, owner of portfolio containing dozens of posh Midtown addresses: $100,000.
- Asbestos lawyer Joseph W. Belluck, a player with a big wad of mesothelioma superfund money to share with his friends in the Albany legislature: $100,000.

As of April 16, Cuomo's Super PAC has raised over $5 million. On April 15, hedge fund billionaire Bill Ackman contributed $250,000. Ackman is a Trump supporter and "activist investor" whose contributions are geared to drum up support for the Netanyahu regime in Israel and its endless Gaza bombing and slaughter that has claimed more than 60,000 Palestinian lives. He is the oligarch who demanded that Columbia University turn over the names of students who signed a petition demanding a ceasefire in Gaza so that he and other corporate moguls would not "inadvertently hire any of them." Ackman finds a kindred spirit in Andrew Cuomo, a knee-jerk supporter of the Zionist cause who once issued a Trump-like executive order requiring businesses contracting with the state to sign a statement resembling a loyalty oath, swearing that they are not boycotting Israel.

From early 2020 until he resigned, Cuomo was the public face of the Democrat strategy of massive lockdowns of businesses throughout New York State and in New York City, an approach that was supposed to "flatten the curve" of COVID-19 transmission. He was heard during his daily briefings calling for "discipline," and deriding people who did not wear masks while walking in the street as "arrogant." Countless small NYC-based shops and businesses were driven out of business by forced closures and the threat of draconian fines for doing business during the lockdown. As far as repression goes, Trump himself may not yet have exceeded the levels of authoritarianism exercised by Cuomo during the pandemic in New York.

Cuomo, who lashed out at people who would not wear masks while walking in the open air, issued an executive order that "[n]o resident shall be denied re-admission or admission to a nursing home solely based on a confirmed or suspected diagnosis of COVID-19". In May 2020, it was reported that 4,500 persons recovering from COVID-19 had been transferred from hospitals into nursing homes. The result was a massive die-off of the elderly [reportedly more than 15,000 fatalities], which the Cuomo administration underestimated by 50% to 80%. Cuomo has that unfortunate characteristic of high-level mainstream Democrat leaders–he lies by instinct, even when it's easier to tell the truth.

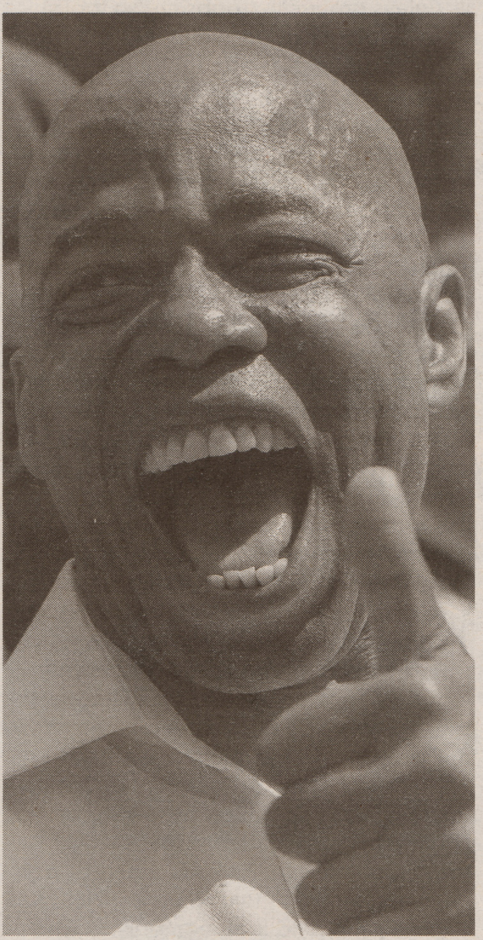
Cuomo is now shaping up as the pliable, practical, and electable candidate of NYC's ruling class in the era of Trump plunder – he will be expected to play a role analogous to that of Ed Koch during the Reagan era. Reminiscent of Rudy Giuliani, his focus on "quality of life" issues like graffiti are typical of a candidate who speaks for the real estate industry. It is ironic however that it was Cuomo's own COVID-19 lockdown that drove businesses out of the city and made it one big graffiti wall of empty stores. Among the Democrat candidates, Cuomo is the one most likely to raise our rents, displace us from our communities and revitalize the police state in a big way.

Just as Andrew Cuomo's disgrace and exile was engineered without asking the people, so is his "spectacular comeback." New York City must reject the players and stand up for the people's power in the age of the dictator.

[Go to the DON'T RANK EVIL ANDREW FOR MAYOR (DREAM) website at https://dreamfornyc.com for a non-billionaire perspective on anointed front-runner Andrew Cuomo].

SAY NO TO ADAMS!

By Frank Morales



On February 18, 2025, the Campaign Legal Center [CLC] filed a complaint with the Federal Election Commission [FEC] alleging that New York City Mayor Eric Adams, and his 2021 and 2025 mayoral campaign committees, violated federal campaign finance law by soliciting and accepting campaign donations from foreign nationals.

For nearly a decade, Adams has used his prominent positions in New York City government to obtain illegal campaign contributions and luxury travel. He has solicited and accepted these benefits from foreign nationals, businessmen, and others. He also pressured the New York City Fire Department to facilitate the opening of a foreign government's Manhattan skyscraper that had not passed a fire inspection. To conceal this criminal conduct, he took steps to hide his receipt of improper benefits from the public and law enforcement.

US Attorney Damian Williams, in reference to Justice Department indictments against the mayor said: "As alleged, Mayor Adams abused his position as this City's highest elected official, and before that as Brooklyn Borough President, to take bribes and solicit illegal campaign contributions. By allegedly taking improper and illegal benefits from foreign nationals–including to allow a Manhattan skyscraper to open without a fire inspection–Adams put the interests of his benefactors, including a foreign official, above those of his constituents." **[See Indictment: https://www.justice.gov/d9/2024-09/u.s._v._adams_indictment_1.pdf]**

Being the first mayor in New York City history to be charged with federal crimes while in office didn't matter because president Trump needed Adams to be freed up to help enforce his administration's immigration agenda. So, in early February, an order from acting deputy attorney general Emil Bove, appointed by Trump, claiming that the indictment had "restricted" the mayor's ability to address "illegal immigration and violent crime" in the city, ordered local federal prosecutors to drop the charges against Adams, triggering a backlash from a group of seasoned Justice Department lawyers who issued statements opposing the move. This led to more than half a dozen prosecutors refusing Bove's order, arguing that the department had not provided sufficient legal justification to drop the charges. Even so, on April 2, the judge overseeing the case permanently dismissed corruption charges against Adams.

In the fall of 2022, the New York Police Department began posting videos online to promote one of its latest initiatives -- the Community Response Team [CRT], an elite unit formed under Adams. The NYPD police unit has played a central role in breaking up college campus protests, to cracking down on illegal motorcycles, and shuttering unlicensed cannabis shops. The fallout for New Yorkers has been significant. A cop chasing unlicensed motorcyclists killed a rider after swerving into him, body-camera footage shows. A commander punched a driver and kicked him in the head, according to cellphone video posted to social media. Cops stopped a young man without apparent cause, according to the audit, and, when he complained, a supervisor slammed him into a car window.

Meanwhile, according to the Police Reform Organizing Project [PROP], during Adams' second year in office, the NYPD substantially escalated its discriminatory "broken windows" practices, leading to an increase in the number of misdemeanor and felony arrests in 2023 by more than 20% over those of 2022, and by more than than 42% over that number in 2021, former mayor Bill de Blasio's last year in office.

Across all arrest categories, 2022 arrest data show that the NYPD persists in its discriminatory practice of targeting low-income people of color for minor infractions, the strategy of criminalizing the poor who are tracked in the system of mass incarceration. Shouldn't come as a surprise, as Adams is a former NYPD police captain.

On the issue of housing, during his 2021 mayoral campaign, Adams fundraised aggressively from the real estate industry, never hesitating to parrot their talking points, like doing away with rent control. A landlord himself, he once declared that "I am real estate." As Brooklyn Borough President, Adams ran a charity that received donations from developers with business before his office. When asked if he supported a rent freeze for rent-stabilized tenants, he said he did not,

The Department of Justice decision to drop corruption charges against Adams is one of the most corrupt acts by the federal law enforcement agency in its history. Adams is a made-man now. An unpaid informant. A forced collaborator, effectively taken over by Trump through this corrupt deal. It goes with saying that that Adams is woefully unqualified to hold the office of mayor, and should (like Trump) be in jail.

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A SALES PITCH FOR ETHNIC CLEANSING

By Stanley L. Cohen, Attorney At Law

Across the Arab world, ordinary citizens stand and watch the United States sliding into the abyss and wonder, what can the Americans be thinking there? Their institutions, packaged once as the envy of the world with a free society and values of compassion and tolerance … all blowing away in the winds of history, over the edge and gone. The true Semites, of the Middle East, and not of Europe, gape at this catastrophe of so-called "liberal" Western-style democracy, as it is casually sucked into the moral black hole of a tedious television entertainer, a Wrestlemania con-man, with his billionaire henchmen and techno-Utopianists, who now plunder the richest, most powerful nation in the world as its own elites sit back in comfort, waiting to carve up the spoils. It is like watching Leviathan washed up on the beach, being dismantled by efficient, busy sand crabs. As everyone knows, fish rots first from the head.

To watch an American president openly say, while dutifully standing in the White House before the flag of an Israeli occupier, "I do see a long-term ownership position" for the United States in the Gaza Strip, as if he were showing a triplex condo on Central Park to a lesser Saudi prince, strips away the last veil in this long, sordid dance, this burlesque of empire pretending to moral superiority, while waiting for the right moment to deploy the Art of the Deal. "The Riviera of the Middle East," he robotically intones, ever the salesman, as a grinning, indicted and fugitive Prime Minister looks on, scarcely able to believe what he is hearing, "The U.S. will take over," and "we'll own it." Of course, everyone from the Achaemenids to Rome to Napoleon has liked Arab beaches, but Palestinians stand with the people of Greenland when they say, "Our land is not for sale;" nor do we yield to conquest, it should be clear to everyone by now. Any U.S. position in Gaza would have well-deserved consequences Americans are not prepared to own.

The American President—like so many before him—has a strange habit of talking about Palestinians as if they have no agency in what befalls them, no choice in the matter. And he talks too, as if what has happened to Palestinians and their land is just random political weather: "The Gaza Strip, which has been a symbol of death and destruction for so many decades," he drones on, "it's been very unlucky, an unlucky place for a long time." In this, he is not so different from each of his predecessors, pretending in his rhetoric that the U.S. and its citizens have not, in fact, been the subsidizing engineers of Palestinian "bad luck", the architects of their misfortune, but rather that it just happened to them, and the reasons why are simply lost in the mists of time.

In fact, the 118th Congress of the American people, under a Democratic president, delivered 85,000 tons of explosives to Israel, which it dropped on the Gazans—all of this paid for by each and every US taxpayer, red state or blue: over 4,000 Hellfire missiles; 14,000 MK-84 2,000-lb. bombs, which blast a crater fifty feet wide and three stories deep; many thousands of 100- and 500-pounders; over 17,000 bomber or drone or missile sorties flown. The total tonnage and complete destruction surpasses that of the Allied bombing of major European cities in the Second World War, or the massive "carpet bombing" dumps over Vietnam. By some estimates, 40% of this destruction came by means of ordinary "dumb bombs," with unexploded munitions now littering Gaza's rubble-scape. All this industrial-scale murder, made in the USA, directed at a people without airplanes or ships or tanks or air defenses, or even water and food now—one has to ask, has any military force in modern memory ever acted as cowardly and cruelly as Israel has done?

This moral atrocity had bi-partisan support—Democrats and Republicans, hand-in-hand—in case anyone thinks US politicians are no longer capable of cooperating. It will take an estimated fifteen years to clear the debris alone—that is, unless American troops are so foolish as to land bulldozers, dig in, and attempt to make it their forward operating base, earning the scorn of the free world, and generations of resistance. Imperial overreach is never far from the American mind, which now prattles from the mouth of its criminal leader, plotting crimes in public, with no one to stop him, as his "efficiency" squads dissolve government agencies in the middle of the night.

All the US tax dollars have only bought it well-deserved contempt and hatred on the Arab street, and around the world. No free-thinking human will ever again entertain the fairy-tale of American liberty and justice, the myth of "Pax Americana." The meaning of the Holocaust has forever been changed. The shape of Zionist intent was visible all along, and ethnic cleansing now has its sales pitch and its salesman, promising, there will be jobs for everyone!

The mass-murder of over 60,000 innocent, mostly women and children; the maiming and terrorizing of almost two million more; the unrelenting destruction of every standing structure in Gaza; the deliberate starvation of its people and intended spread of disease —all of these activities are the lawless acts of war criminals, led by a delusional, convicted criminal, and paid for by Americans who are now in the eighth decade of a fantasy: that the Palestinians should cease to exist. And now the American president proposes further war crimes openly, to a roomful of applause, musing out loud on what a "world class" development will replace Palestinian towns and cities, as if Gaza were one of his failed casino projects in New Jersey, or his sham on-line university. And the captive "free" press, now quaking in fear before its mighty Potentate, blandly airs without comment his psychotic nihilism, as if concepts of international law no longer exist. For this is what America's willing dispossession of the Palestinians will mean: that law no longer exists.

It is a dark road to go down, disappearing into a forest of unbroken nightmares. Somewhere in that forest, as the path winds on, are familiar, dark American horrors: black citizens lynched from trees; atomic bombs flashing shadow-people on stone; napalm burning a child running down a road; the Capitol swarmed by a deadly mob of angry men and women desperate to safeguard the privilege of skin-tone that they ache for, but do not have and never will. A nation born from the genocide of five million Native Americans once again chooses genocide, its original sin, inescapable and mutating through time.

There can no longer be any ignorance in the American people about Palestine's tragedy, or the nature of its fight: Israel's crimes against Palestinians indict America's failure to act lawfully as a nation, to stand for what is basic and right.

The slow-motion eradication since well before 1948 of Palestinian national rights, sovereign lands and now their people themselves has unfolded in plain view for all to see, and none to deny. The "international community" which once "committed" itself to protect the very rights and lives of all Palestinians, now eagerly awaits real estate brochures for beach-front condos—as if its resistance movements would let that happen. But Palestinians wonder, what will the American people do?

As a dear friend and client of 30 plus years … a Palestinian resistance leader recently said to me in speaking of the American body politic … "If we might give a word of advice to them: beware of the rot of lawlessness that spreads down from the top, from your elites, your oligarchs. Like a cancer, it will devour your rights sooner than it will defeat ours."

"I WANT A DEATH THAT THE WORLD WILL HEAR"

JOURNALIST ASSASSINATED BY ISRAEL FOR TELLING THE TRUTH

Israel assassinated a photojournalist in Gaza in an airstrike targeting her family's home on April 16, the day after it was announced that a documentary she appears in would premier in Cannes in May.

Her name was Fatima Hassouna. Nine members of her family were also reportedly killed in the bombing. She was going to get married in a few days.

The documentary is titled *Put Your Soul on Your Hand and Walk*, and it's about Israel's crimes in Gaza.

In an Instagram post from August of last year, Hassouna wrote the following:

"If I die, I want a loud death. I don't want to be just breaking news, or a number in a group; I want a death that the world will hear, an impact that will remain through time, and a timeless image that cannot be buried by time or place."

-- Caitlin Johnstone

NO MORE EXCUSES

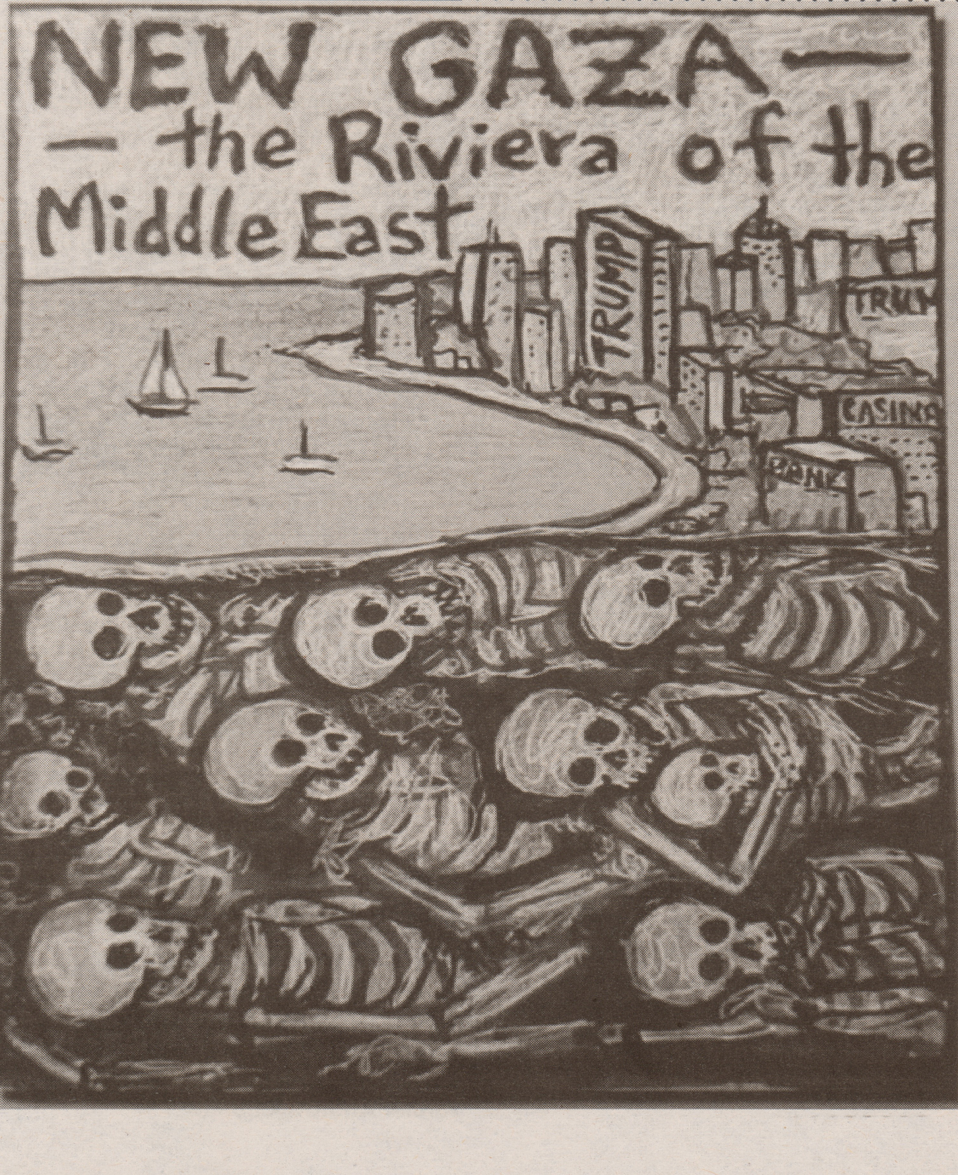
There are no more excuses. The Resistance isn't firing back. The UN building that was shelled [on March 19 in the Gaza strip] could only have been shelled by Israel. There are no armed fighters coming out of the tunnels so the houses and tents being bombed cannot be sites from which attacks are being launched. Any real Hamas targets would be tens of meters underground, but there's no sign that Israel is trying to hit such targets. They are simply leveling whatever is left and terrorizing a trapped population that they are deliberately starving.

This was never a war on Hamas and always a war on the Palestinian people. The goal was never to kill them all, but simply to kill as many as necessary to make the rest leave. They did it in 1948 (when there was no Hamas), they did it in 1967 (when there was no Hamas), they've been doing it in West Bank (where there's no Hamas), in East Jerusalem (where's there's no Hamas) - even in Israel (where there's no Hamas).

This is not just what Israel does: it is what Israel IS. Israel only exists as a "Jewish State" in Palestine because of the forced elimination of more than a million Palestinians and Israel would not exist as a "Jewish State" were it to grant every Palestinian the same rights it grants to Jews.

Anyone who still believes the lies at this point is not only willfully blind but complicit in genocide.

-- Peter Cohen

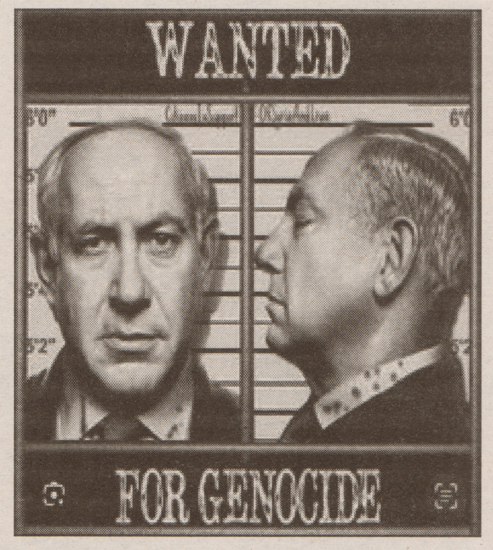


"Free Gaza From Hamas" Really Means "Free Gaza From All Palestinians"

By Caitlin Johnstone

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu continues to insist that Israel will carry out Trump's ethnic cleansing plans for Gaza, saying the following on March 30 about "the final stage" of his agenda:

"Hamas will lay down its weapons. Its leaders will be allowed to leave. We will see to the general security in the Gaza Strip and will allow the realization of the Trump plan for voluntary migration. This is the plan. We are not hiding this and are ready to discuss it at any time."



Netanyahu's suggestion that Trump's plan for the migration of Palestinians out of Gaza would be "voluntary" is misleading in two separate ways.

Firstly, it is nonsensical to deliberately and systematically make a place uninhabitable and then claim that anyone who leaves that place would be leaving voluntarily. Israeli spinmeisters have been pushing this narrative since the early days of the onslaught, and it's transparently bogus; telling people they can leave or starve to death is exactly the same as forcing them out at gunpoint.

Secondly, Trump's plan for the ethnic cleansing of Gaza is not "voluntary" on its face. Trump has explicitly said "all" Palestinians are to be removed from the enclave and would not be allowed to return, which of course necessarily means that anyone who wants to stay will not be permitted to. Netanyahu says he wants to realize Trump's plan, and Trump's plan is forcible ethnic cleansing.

A Knesset member from Netanyahu's Likud party named Amit Halevi was just on Israeli radio saying that the plan is "to occupy the territory to cleanse it of the enemy," adding that Israel needs "to return to Gaza permanently and control this space, because it is part of our homeland."

When Israel apologists respond to chants of "Free Gaza" with "Free Gaza from Hamas," what they really mean is "Free Gaza from all Palestinians." The agenda they are cheerleading has ultimately nothing to do with Hamas – it's about purging a Palestinian territory of Palestinians and replacing them with Israeli Jews. It's yet another Israeli land grab and yet another drive to eliminate Palestinians from their historic homeland.

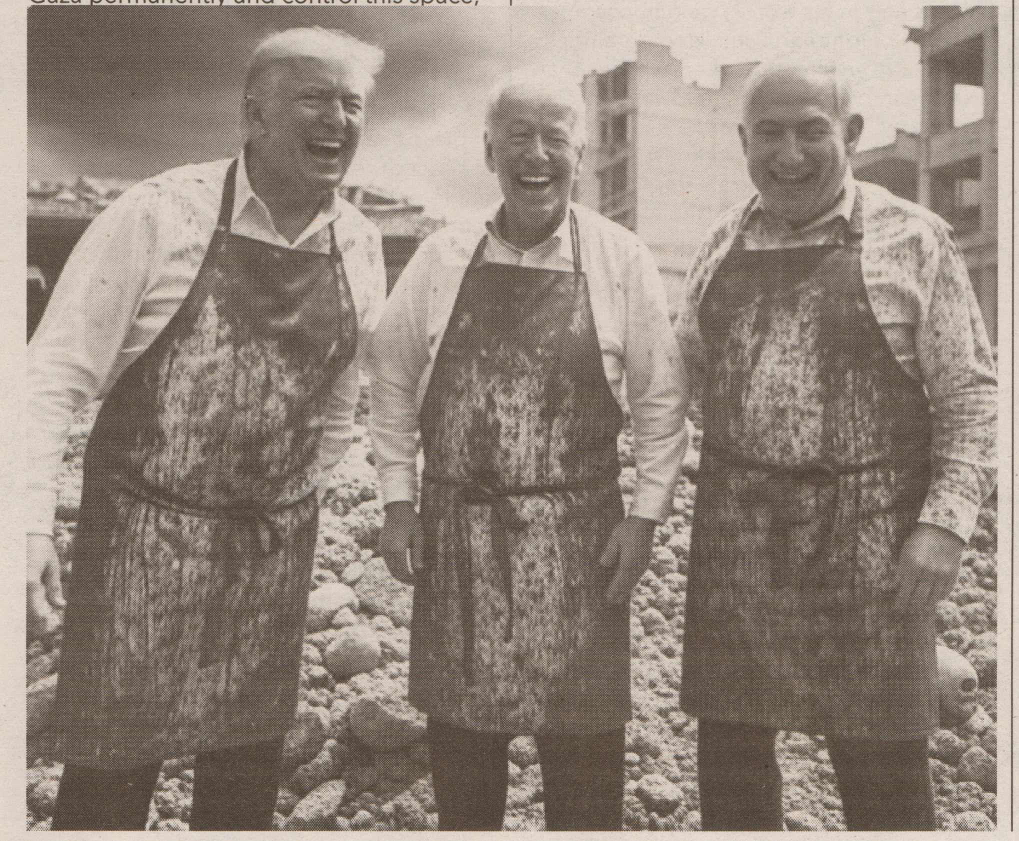
If this was really about freeing Palestinians from Hamas, then why is Israel also seizing on this political moment to advance ethnic cleansing agendas in the West Bank, where Hamas does not govern? Defense Minister Israel Katz is on record saying of the occupied West Bank that "We must deal with the threat just as we deal with the terrorist infrastructure in Gaza," and the Gaza playbook is being increasingly utilized there. Tens of thousands have been displaced as the Jenin refugee camp has been made uninhabitable under an aggressive Israeli bombing campaign, with hundreds of homes actively destroyed – not to combat Hamas, but to get rid of the Palestinians. Because that's all this has ever been about.

The western press have been obsessively covering the fact that some demonstrators in Gaza have been voicing discontent with Hamas, after those same press outlets just spent a year and a half ignoring millions of anti-genocide protesters around the world and running cover for Israel's mass atrocities in Gaza.

"Look!" we are told. "Those demonstrations prove that the people of Gaza want to be free from Hamas! This vindicates everything Israel and its allies have been doing!"

But, again, Israel's actions have nothing to do with Hamas. Hamas isn't the reason, it's the excuse. The excuse to advance an agenda that Israel has been trying to advance for as long as it has existed as a modern state.

This is what Israel's supporters and defenders are really advocating. Not the elimination of Hamas, and certainly not Palestinian freedom. They're advocating the end of the existence of Palestinians on Palestinian territory. No matter how much they try to sugarcoat it, that is their position. That's what Israel wants, so supporting Israel's actions in Gaza is necessarily supporting the ends toward which Israel is pushing.



A PERSONAL NOTE FROM AN ISRAELI SOLDIER

[Editor's Note: This is an OpEd written by Israeli soldier Yuval Green, age 26. It was published in Haaretz, an Israeli newspaper, on March 21 2025]

"We were ordered to burn the house; I notified them that I was not willing to comply. I left Gaza and never returned."

Like many Israelis, I enlisted in the military out of a sense of loyalty to the state and a willingness to sacrifice. After a challenging combat service, I continued to serve as a reserve soldier. On October 7, 2023, I was called, along with my comrades, to defend the borders of the country. That very evening, I arrived at the supply warehouses of my reserve unit. There, we received old and faulty equipment and witnessed how the military, on which we relied, failed to prepare for an extreme scenario.

In the following days, we entered the affected settlements around the Gaza Strip. I saw the deserted paths of Gaza villages, corpses lying in them, cars riddled with bullets, destroyed homes.

After the first days of the war, my unit entered a period of waiting and training. During that time, doubts began to take root in me. I believed that Israel's primary commitment should be toward the hostages, who had been taken cruelly from their homes due to the security failure. I thought that there was no military solution to the hostage problem.

It was clear to me that military action in Gaza was endangering the lives of the hostages. At the same time, I assumed that Hamas would be willing to sign a deal – after all, they kidnapped the people to free prisoners in Israel. Moreover, after the terrible disaster we experienced on October 7th, I thought that the last thing we needed was more fallen soldiers.

Beyond the consequences of the war for us, Israelis, I watched in pain what was happening in Gaza. Already in the early days of the war, there were thousands of casualties, thousands of destroyed homes, displaced persons, suffering, and pain.

Despite my doubts, I chose to enter Gaza with my comrades. I did this because, as a platoon medic, I felt a strong sense of commitment to them. Furthermore, at that time, I still struggled to know what the right thing was – maybe I am wrong? Maybe the way to bring back the hostages does go through military action?

A few days after we entered Gaza, in early December 2023, I heard a news report on the radio stating that Israel was refusing to end the war in order to bring back the hostages. This news devastated me. My motivation for service was shaken even more. Still, my sense of duty as a medic kept me in Gaza.

A few weeks later, 50 days after entering Gaza, we received an order from our company commander: after we leave the house we are staying in, we must burn it. The order left me in shock. I asked the commander why we were burning the house. His first response – which, in my eyes, exemplifies the indifference to Palestinian lives – I will never forget: "We are burning the house because we don't have a D9 bulldozer available." After I insisted on understanding, he added: "We burn every house we leave." My requests to reconsider the act went unanswered, and that evening, around four buildings were burned in Khan Yunis. I witnessed those fires, the black smoke. How many families lost their homes that evening?

I informed my commander that I was not willing to cooperate with this action, and I was leaving the fighting. I set a clear moral boundary in the face of immoral actions. I left Gaza in the first supply vehicle and never returned, five days before my unit withdrew from the fighting.

The commentators in the studios engage in debates about "total victory" or the "collapse of Hamas." I don't know the military situation of Hamas, but I know one thing – it doesn't matter at all. The reasons that led to the rise of Hamas in Gaza are the same reasons that led to the rise of the fedayeen in the 1950s and the rise of the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] in the 1960s. Without a political settlement, when the Palestinians are under our control, they will always rise against us, carry out attacks, and fight. Even if Hamas is eradicated, another movement will rise in its place.

This war, despite being sold to us as a change in the reality of the Middle East, in fact entrenches exactly the same reality. Another waste of blood, more killing, leading to more violent opposition, which leads to more killing.

The war in Gaza continues primarily because of a rotten and corrupt political culture, where cynical and unworthy politicians are dragged into a messianic struggle led by religious fanatics, who view settling the land as a higher value than human life.

I believe that Israeli culture, which blindly elevates military service above any other human value, is what allows extremists to lead us down this path. I see many people around me who recognize reality as I see it. They understand that the military pressure is killing the hostages, understand that the war is killing soldiers, understand that we are fighting mainly due to pressure from extreme elements. But they continue to show up for service. They don't connect their military service with the continuation of the war.

We are often accused, those of us who refuse to participate in the war, of harming the army and thereby endangering the security of the state. However, I believe that in a country walking the path of fascism, where ending the war is seen as a "painful concession" in negotiations, there will never be enough soldiers. Even if we recruit all the yeshiva students, send all the youth to the front, and even mobilize the Arab population, there will always be more land to conquer in Syria, another enclave in the West Bank to seize.

In my opinion, strengthening the security of the state lies in a firm opposition to the war that endangers our soldiers, harms our economy, kills many Palestinians, and thus sows deep seeds of hatred – and of course, abandons our brothers and sisters in captivity.

My comrades and I in the organization "Soldiers for Hostages" declared that we will not be willing to continue cooperating with the abandonment of the hostages. If the government does not change course, we will not continue to serve. In such an extreme political climate, our role has become more important than ever. In recent months, since the publication of our letter in an article by Liza Rozovsky ["Haaretz" 9.10.2024], we have received significant responses that indicate how much our movement is troubling the leadership. This, despite the fact that at the time of publication, we were only 130 soldiers. The Prime Minister addressed our group in a cabinet meeting and said about us: "They've lost their national compass." In addition, each signatory of the letter received a personal phone call from their battalion or brigade commander, demanding they remove their signature.

It is important to clarify that we, the signatories of the letter, now more than 200 soldiers, are neither deserters nor evaders. Among us are fighters and officers who fought in Gaza and Lebanon. We choose this path not out of a desire to evade our duties and not because of the burden of reserve duty, but precisely because of our deep commitment to the state.

Just as we were willing to risk ourselves, strive, and fight in battle, today we believe we must give of ourselves to stand up to social pressure. We do this because we think it's time to draw a red line for the war.

NOW IS THE TIME OF MONSTERS

By Sarah Kunstler

[Author's note and update, as of April 22, 2025: I first published the article below on March 23, eight days after the administration loaded 261 people onto three planes and sent them—without hearings, without counsel, without charges—to be imprisoned in El Salvador. This unprecedented action, cloaked in secrecy and justified under an obscure 1798 law historically reserved for wartime, marked the beginning of an extrajudicial outsourcing of American incarceration. In the weeks since, more details have emerged.

We now know that Armando Abrego Garcia was among those deported. The administration has since admitted that his removal was a "mistake," yet it continues to defy a Supreme Court order to "facilitate" his return.

On April 14, at a White House meeting with El Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele, President Trump reportedly said, "The homegrowns are next," urging Bukele to "build about five more places." What began with Venezuelan nationals is poised to expand to U.S. citizens.

The article below warned of the administration's use of fear-based language to justify lawless action. But in the short time since it was written, the mask has slipped. The administration is no longer pretending to act within the bounds of law. It has learned it doesn't have to.

This is how authoritarianism works: when power is left unchecked, it metastasizes. What once required secrecy is now done openly. What once relied on the pretext of legality is now carried out through brute assertion.

We are witnessing the logical endpoint of impunity.

Let us not grow accustomed to it.]

On March 15, three planes carrying 261 "monsters" took off from Harlingen, Texas, bound for a prison in El Salvador. Or at least, that's what the Trump administration wants us to believe.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt described the men, who had recently been arrested, as "heinous monsters" and "terrorists" belonging to the Tren de Aragua gang, whose arrests saved "countless American lives."

The flights carrying these men to El Salvador marked the first mass use of the Alien Enemies Act of 1798 in modern American history—an obscure wartime law now being wielded in peacetime to deport people in near-total secrecy. President Trump recently issued a proclamation stating that the use of this Act was necessitated by the "hostile actions" and "irregular warfare" conducted by Tren de Aragua "against the territory of the United States." The proclamation, which Trump later denied signing, authorizes expedited removal of all Venezuelan citizens ages 14 and older deemed members of the group and who are not U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents, calling them "a danger to the public peace or safety of the United States."

When a federal judge pressed the Trump administration for more details on these flights, in response to a lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union and Democracy Forward, the government filed a sworn declaration from Robert L. Cerna, the Acting Field Office Director for Enforcement and Removal Operations at the U.S. Immigration Customs and Enforcement field office in Harlingen, Texas.

In this declaration, Cerna argued, perplexingly, that "the lack of specific information about each individual actually highlights the risk they pose," demonstrating "that they are terrorists with regard to whom we lack a complete profile." What Cerna does here is very troubling. He points to an absence of evidence as evidence, engaging an argument from ignorance—a logical fallacy that assumes something is true simply because it has not been proven false, or vice versa. He is wielding a lack of proof as proof itself.

And he is not alone. When Tricia McLaughlin, the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs for the Department of Homeland Security [DHS] appeared on NewsNation's "Elizabeth Vargas Reports" on March 19, she refused to reveal the names of the Venezuelans the administration loaded onto those planes, much less the accusations against them. Rather than offer evidence, McLaughlin gave emotion. Instead of facts, she delivered fear.

McLaughlin told Vargas that the planes were filled with "murderers, rapists, child abusers, kidnappers, drug dealers…." Her language was vivid, even horrifying. But it wasn't accompanied by proof. No names. No charges. No evidence.

When Vargas pressed McLaughlin for the names of the people on the plane, McLaughlin shifted the narrative, accusing the media of siding with violent gangs like Tren de Aragua. "Why are we less concerned about the American victims in our own homeland than they are about doing the bidding of these vicious gangs," she asked.

Like Cerna, McLaughlin substitutes logical fallacies for actual information. She misrepresents Vargas' position in order to undermine legitimate questions. This is what is known as a straw man argument. It's also a false dilemma, suggesting that to ask questions is to side with criminals. These rhetorical strategies aren't just logical fallacies. They're tools of authoritarianism—ways of evading scrutiny, silencing dissent and consolidating power.

Throughout her interview, McLaughlin also invokes authority—repeatedly citing President Trump and Secretary Noem—as if their titles alone justified secretive actions. But in a democracy, no administration is above transparency. No policy is immune from public oversight.

Cerna's argument from ignorance - and McLaughlin's fear mongering - echo the methods used during the Salem witch trials of the early 1690s. In Salem, the lack of physical evidence of witchcraft was twisted into "proof" that witches were hiding their powers. The more invisible the evidence, the more certain the accusers became. Because there was no actual proof, courts admitted "spectral evidence," testimony of witnesses who claimed that those accused of witchcraft had appeared to them in a dream or vision and done them harm.

The Salem witch trials took place almost a century before the ratification of the U.S. Constitution and the passage of the Bill of Rights. Those accused of witchcraft in Salem were guilty until proven innocent. Now, we supposedly have a system in which people accused of crimes are innocent until proven guilty.

According to former Columbia University President Lee Bollinger, what we're witnessing is an "authoritarian takeover of government." This is how it starts: with officials demanding trust while withholding evidence, weaponizing victimhood to shame critics, and branding the free press as accomplices to crime.

We're fortunate that a member of the press, photojournalist Philip Holsinger, was standing on the tarmac in El Salvador when the planes descended from the night sky. His photo essay, What the Venezuelans Deported to El Salvador Experienced, is necessary viewing. Through his lens and in his words, we glimpse a dystopian nightmare: shackled detainees dragged from aircraft and onto buses that disappear into the night, following a route flanked by "police and soldiers for miles and miles in woodland darkness," before arriving at "CECOT," the Center for the Confinement of Terrorism, the mega-prison where President Nayib Bukele posted on X that he has agreed to house deportees from the United States "for a fee." According to Holsinger: "For these Venezuelans, it was not just a prison they had arrived at. It was exile to another world, a place so cold and far from home they may as well have been sent into space, nameless and forgotten. Holding my camera, it was as if I watched them become ghosts."

Thankfully, these men are no longer nameless. On March 20, CBS News released an "internal government list" of the names of the Venezuelans the administration put on those planes.

One of the names on that list is Mervin Yamarte, age 29. His family told NBC News "that he had an open asylum case with a hearing set for July" and that he does not have a criminal record and was not connected to Tren de Aragua." He is an avid amateur soccer player and fan. His family wonders if he was picked up because of his tattoos, which are not gang insignias, but the number on his soccer jersey, the names of his mother and daughter, and the date he and his partner began dating. No records have been found that he has ever been charged, let alone convicted, of any crime.

Press Secretary Leavitt provided the following breakdown of the 261 people on the three flights: 137 were deported under the Alien Enemies Act; 101 were Venezuelans deported under regular immigration proceedings; and 23 were members of the MS-13 gang.

Whatever else these men may be, they are not "monsters." They are human beings. Assuming that 101 of those deported were afforded due process protections—an assumption we should not accept without evidence—that leaves 160 human beings who were not tried in court, not granted legal representation, and not given an opportunity to respond to the accusations against them, bypassing safeguards meant to protect both the innocent and the integrity of our legal system. This is not just a moral failure. It is a collapse of constitutional accountability.

And while their deportation may mark the administration's first use of of the Alien Enemies Act, it is part of a wider pattern. Since returning to office in January, President Trump has deported hundreds of migrants from around the world to Panama, Costa Rica, and El Salvador. The New York Times recently published a report on approximately 300 migrants now sleeping on mattresses in a school gymnasium near Panama City, after being deported from the U.S. last month. Hailing "from Iran, Afghanistan, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Uzbekistan and elsewhere," they are stranded—afraid to return to their home countries—and say they were never given an opportunity to apply for asylum. Among them: a 19-year-old Afghan woman separated from her parents and younger siblings at the U.S. border; a 24-year-old gay woman from Iran—where openly gay people face government persecution; a 34-year-old former officer of the Afghan Army who worked with U.S. Special Forces; and a 37-year-old Amhara woman from Ethiopia, who says she fled after her home was set on fire, her father and brother were killed, and police warned she would be next. Our friend Tricia McLaughlin from DHS told the Times that these migrants had been "properly removed" and insisted that "not a single one of these aliens asserted fear of returning to their home country at any point during processing or custody."

McLaughlin's language here is colder, more bureaucratic—but no less chilling. Words like "properly removed" mask the human cost of deporting people who fled their home countries and came to the U.S. seeking help—obscuring the violence of disappearance beneath the language of procedure. Her insistence that "not a single one… asserted fear" echoes the same logic used in El Salvador: to silence questions, erase context, and shift blame onto the very people being cast out. Even the word "aliens" does rhetorical work—it casts these individuals as fundamentally other, not like us, and unworthy of the rights or empathy extended to citizens. It's the language of exclusion masquerading as law.

We must be vigilant. And we must not look away.

[Sarah Kunstler is a lawyer and documentary filmmaker. Together with her sister Emily, she directed "William Kunstler: Disturbing the Universe" and "Who We Are: A Chronicle of Racism in America." This article first appeared in "Freedom is in the Footnotes," Ms. Kunstler's newsletter, available on Substack.]

IF MARTIAL LAW COMES – WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT IT !

By Frank Morales

Despite the exceedingly clear language of the 22nd Amendment to the US Constitution, which limits a president to two terms, in a recent NBC interview, president Trump said there were ways to overcome all of that constitutional stuff. With typical mendacity, he stated that "a lot of people want me to do it." That is, to extend his presidency beyond 2028. In the interview, Trump was hardly subtle. "I'm not joking," he said, adding that there are "methods" in which he could pursue such a goal. Asked about a possible scenario in which Vice President JD Vance would run for office and then pass the role to him, he responded that "that's one" method, "but there are others, too."

Indeed, there are others. One possible scenario would involve a declaration of martial law resulting from a "terrorist attack" "in the homeland." Or an assassination of a government official, or a "riot" or "civil disorder" (read: protest), perhaps resulting in property destruction, or even law enforcement casualties, a "state of emergency" that would necessitate Trump staying on "for the good of the country." A myriad of scenarios can be imagined.

In practical terms, martial law would mean the replacement of democratic governance by military rule, along with the suspension of civilian legal processes, replaced by military powers. Of course, these "military powers" would be under the direction of corporate oligarchs and the White House. A state of martial law would mean the suspension of all existing laws, civil authority and the disruption of the ordinary administration of justice. Martial law would be "declared" by proclamation by Trump or a state governor, but such a formal proclamation is not necessary and can continue for either a specified amount of time, or indefinitely, a martial law creep. Trump and the congress have the power, within certain constraints, to impose martial law, since both can be in charge of the militia. In nearly every state, the governor has the power to impose martial law - or prevent it - within the borders of each state.

The imposition of martial law would more than likely involve curfews, the suspension of civil law, civil rights, and the application or extension of military law or "military justice" to civilians. In that instance, anyone defying martial law would be subjected to court-martial and military tribunals. And when the rubber hits the road, it is the police entities (including ICE and the FBI) which would be called on to implement martial law "on the ground." And if a local police department refuses to carry out the orders of the Trump White House, well then, the troops would be called in.

A "declaration" of martial law directly impacts the right of habeas corpus, stripping the accused of the right to due process, the right to a hearing and trial on lawful (or unlawful) imprisonment, or more broadly, stripping away judicial oversight of law enforcement, as we are witnessing today. It appears that we are teetering on the precipice of a suspension of habeas corpus. Witness the seizing of former Columbia graduate student Mahmoud Khalil, who continues to be held in ICE custody in detention in Louisiana. The assault of Khalil and others is an attempt to crush the Palestinian solidarity movement in the US by casting protesters as "antisemitic" Hamas supporters, part of "the Hamas support network," a slander being promoted by the Heritage Foundation's Project Esther, the blueprint for the current assault on students and universities engaged in the struggle against Israeli genocide.

ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] police, let loose by Trump to terrorize immigrant communities throughout the US, function as a sort of amerikkkan gestapo. Flashing fraudulent warrants, they forcibly snatch people up. And now, they've apparently grown the list of their targets, from farm and service workers to students exercising their right to free speech. ICE makes use of detention centers throughout the US. During its first term, the Trump regime grew the immigration detention system in the United States to an unprecedented size, at times holding more than 56,000 people per day. These are prisons of mistreatment and abuse, now designated for foreign students and others, having grown to a sprawling network of more than 200 detention centers nationwide, largely operated by private prison corporations.

The creeping martial law which is upon us is reminiscent of an earlier nightmare cooked up by the Reagan administration. Known as "REX 84," it was a classified scenario and drill developed by the rabid anti-communist president to detain large numbers of US residents deemed to be "national security threats." First uncovered by Miami Herald journalist Alphonso Chardy, the scenario envisioned so-called "state defense forces" rounding up some 500,000 "undocumented" immigrants and 4,000 American citizens whom the Attorney General had designated as "national security threats." Those people would be detained at 22 military bases run by FEMA [Federal Emergency Management Agency].

As for the direct employment of troops to enforce martial law and suppress resistance to corporate rule, despite the fact that the federal 1878 Posse Comitatus Act forbids US military involvement in domestic law enforcement, the Trumpist congress will most certainly approve sending troops against protesters when they deem it necessary, utilizing so-called "non-lethal" weaponry, the media friendly means to make war on non-combatants in order to force compliance to the rule of the billionaire class.

The military, for its part, has been preparing for such "operations other than war" [OOTW] to suppress "civil disturbance" for some time now. US Army Field Manual FM 3-19.15, "Civil Disturbance Operations" explains how it's done, while the US military plan to suppress dissent in America, code-named "Operation Garden Plot," initiated in 1968 following the King assassination, is now overseen by the Northern Command [USNORTHCOM], which is the umbrella under which all this nakedly unconstitutional machinery of repression resides.

Finally, there are rumors that Trump has been considering whether to invoke the Insurrection Act of 1807, a rarely-used law that would allow him to deploy the US military domestically, under certain conditions. The speculation centers around a report from DHS [Department of Homeland Security] Secretary Kristi Noem and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth that was to be presented to Trump by April 20. Well, as it turns out, as CNN dutifully reported on April 18, that "For now, Pentagon and DHS won't recommend that Trump invoke the Insurrection Act" - emphasis on "for now." Perhaps they didn't want to steal the thunder of Hitler's April 20 birthday.

What happens if Trump invokes the Insurrection Act? Well, there's a spectrum of possibilities: Troops deployed for domestic law enforcement–not just at the border, but potentially in cities across the country. Military involvement in immigration raids, including far from the southern border. Protests, organizing, and dissent met with an increased military presence, or "federalized" national guard troops under the guise of "maintaining order" - even in situations, or especially in situations, where local police refuse to carry out the will of the dictator.

So, what can we do here in NYC to prevent, forestall and effectively resist the impacts of martial law?

First and foremost, express fearless "lone wolf" opposition to martial law in

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COLLUSION

Resistance in a Divisive Society

By James Spione

Ruling class power is building an authoritarian cage around us, one partisan-fueled crackdown at a time.

On March 8, two ICE agents barged into student housing at New York's Columbia University and arrested Mahmoud Khalil, a permanent legal resident, Palestinian activist and former graduate student who helped lead the protest movement against the war on Gaza at Columbia. In an alarming statement, President Trump vowed that this will be "the first arrest of many to come," promising to deport foreign students and "agitators" involved in "anti-Semitic, anti-American activity" and calling them "terrorist sympathizers" that are holding "illegal protests." Wait, what? What constitutes an "illegal protest?" Protests are broadly defined as legal in the First Amendment of the US Constitution. Aren't they? And you are allowed to be "anti-American" and criticize the government. No?

Fox News and the right in general have applauded Khalil's arrest, which they said shut down an "anti-Israel agitator" and "ringleader." Secretary of State Marco Rubio warned that "we will be revoking the visas and/or green cards of Hamas supporters in America so they can be deported." At the same time, Democrats and liberal-leaning media immediately screamed "Fascism!" in unison. "A chilling escalation in the president's crusade to stifle political dissent," said Vanity Fair. "A red alert for universities," warned The Nation, "this is what fascism looks like." Senator Richard Durbin (D) stated that this was "straight up authoritarianism." I cannot disagree.

However, it was not long ago that, under the Biden Administration, more than 3,000 college students protesting the war in Gaza were arrested nationwide. I witnessed one such crackdown personally on May 2, 2024, when a group of student demonstrators sitting peacefully on a campus quad at the college where I teach were assaulted and arrested by dozens of police officers in a coordinated response from multiple jurisdictions, including campus police, multiple town police departments, State Police, even New York City Department of Environmental Conservation officers. There were drones surveying the scene, even a helicopter circling about at dangerously low altitudes in close proximity to nearby Westchester County Airport, a likely violation of FAA safety protocols.

I have to wonder, was the arrest of nearly 80 students and five faculty at my college, SUNY Purchase, some of whom sustained concussions and other serious injuries, "stifling political dissent?" Was it "straight up" authoritarianism, or some other kind? I don't remember Dick Durbin making a statement about it.

In any event, it is not possible that the highly complex and coordinated enforcement response I witnessed at Purchase unfolded spontaneously. This was the result of meticulous advance planning, at least at the State level and, I suspect, with federal help as well. In fact, by strange coincidence, on that very same afternoon, May 2nd, President Biden himself made his first and only speech addressing the growing nationwide student protest movement on college campuses. The universally reported pull-quote from that speech, repeated dutifully by nearly all of the corporate media, was: "Order Must Prevail." And within hours, as if on cue, crackdowns not only occurred at colleges across New York State–at Buffalo, New Paltz, Stony Brook, Purchase and Fordham–but indeed across the country, including Yale, the University of Texas at Dallas, UCLA, Portland State and the University of New Hampshire, among others. All of this, under the political party that campaigned on "defending democracy" and "resisting fascism" throughout 2024.

Our problem is this: almost NO ONE is standing for free speech on principle anymore. Instead, those on either side of the binary ideological spectrum pick and choose the speech they like while consistently attacking the speech with which they disagree and even worse, cheering on its repression by the state. Those on the right, for instance, were deeply concerned about the stifling of dissent from credentialed medical doctors during the pandemic (many of whom turned out to be correct in their criticisms) but are now applauding the authoritarian crackdown on college protesters. For the Democratic left, those positions are reversed. And these partisan factions mirror each other in claiming that they are protecting society from "danger" or "harm"–which is, of course, the stated rationale of literally every fascist regime ever. Sadly, this kind of issue-by-issue, partisan cherry picking has resulted over time in the enabling of the core idea that whoever is in power gets to decide who is allowed to say what. And because the populace cannot or will not unify around the core principle of free speech, but instead is constantly at war with each other, any effective resistance is mitigated and diffused. And the crackdowns keep coming.

Columbia University has announced that "law enforcement must have a judicial warrant" to enter residence buildings, and that it is "committed to the legal rights

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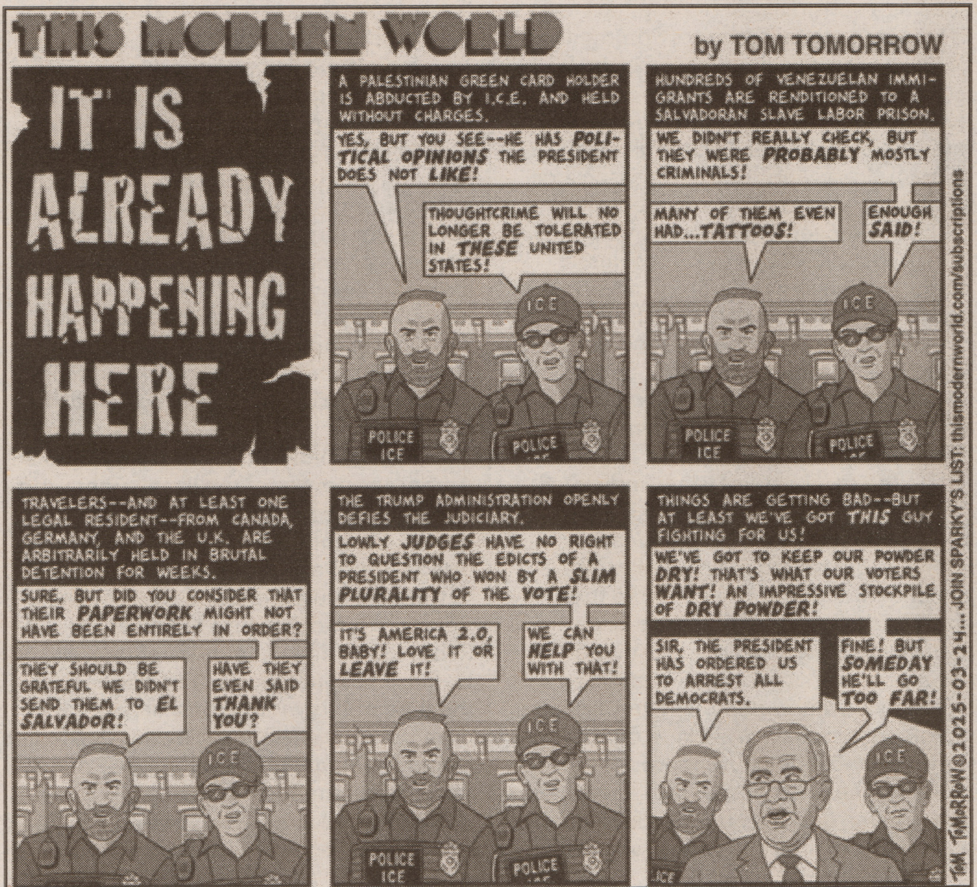
THIS MODERN WORLD
by TOM TOMORROW
IT IS ALREADY HAPPENING HERE
A PALESTINIAN GREEN CARD HOLDER IS ABDUCTED BY I.C.E. AND HELD WITHOUT CHARGES.
YES, BUT YOU SEE--HE HAS POLITICAL OPINIONS THE PRESIDENT DOES NOT LIKE!
THOUGHTCRIME WILL NO LONGER BE TOLERATED IN THESE UNITED STATES!
POLICE ICE
POLICE
HUNDREDS OF VENEZUELAN IMMIGRANTS ARE RENDITIONED TO A SALVADORAN SLAVE LABOR PRISON.
WE DIDN'T REALLY CHECK, BUT THEY WERE PROBABLY MOSTLY CRIMINALS!
MANY OF THEM EVEN HAD...TATTOOS!
ENOUGH SAID!
TRAVELERS--AND AT LEAST ONE LEGAL RESIDENT--FROM CANADA, GERMANY, AND THE U.K. ARE ARBITRARILY HELD IN BRUTAL DETENTION FOR WEEKS.
SURE, BUT DID YOU CONSIDER THAT THEIR PAPERWORK MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN ENTIRELY IN ORDER?
THEY SHOULD BE GRATEFUL WE DIDN'T SEND THEM TO EL SALVADOR!
HAVE THEY EVEN SAID THANK YOU?
THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION OPENLY DEFIES THE JUDICIARY.
LOWLY JUDGES HAVE NO RIGHT TO QUESTION THE EDICTS OF A PRESIDENT WHO WON BY A SLIM PLURALITY OF THE VOTE!
IT'S AMERICA 2.0, BABY! LOVE IT OR LEAVE IT!
WE CAN HELP YOU WITH THAT!
THINGS ARE GETTING BAD--BUT AT LEAST WE'VE GOT THIS GUY FIGHTING FOR US!
WE'VE GOT TO KEEP OUR POWDER DRY! THAT'S WHAT OUR VOTERS WANT! AN IMPRESSIVE STOCKPILE OF DRY POWDER!
SIR, THE PRESIDENT HAS ORDERED US TO ARREST ALL DEMOCRATS.
FINE! BUT SOMEDAY HE'LL GO TOO FAR!
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FRACKING THE HOLY LAND:

HOW MUCH DAMAGE WILL BILLIONAIRES DO TO SUCK THE LAST FOSSIL FUEL FROM THE MIDDLE EAST WAR ZONE?

By A. Kronstadt

In **SHADOW #64**, we reported on suspicious trading activity on the New York Stock Exchange affecting Genie Energy, whose shares spiked enormously in the days leading up to the October 7, 2023 attack on Israeli territory by Hamas **[a militant Palestinian nationalist and Islamist movement dedicated to the establishment of an independent Islamic state in Palestine – Ed].** Genie Energy is the company picked by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to drill for oil in the Golan Heights, a section of Syrian territory occupied by Israel since 1967.

The spike in the shares of Genie Energy was mirrored by a wave of short selling in the Israel stock market as a whole, including the shares of Ratio Energy, the company picked by the Israeli government to exploit the Gaza Marine gas fields which are claimed by the Palestinian Authority. Short selling is a maneuver in which speculators attempt to profit from an expected decline in the value of stock by buying it with borrowed money and then selling that stock when the value increases again.

In **SHADOW #64**, we suggested the possibility that investors with inside knowledge of the 2023 attack were moving capital around in expectation of potential super profits to be made from the resulting war. With the right sources of information and deep enough pockets, the really big players can profit from human misery whether war makes the market go up or down.

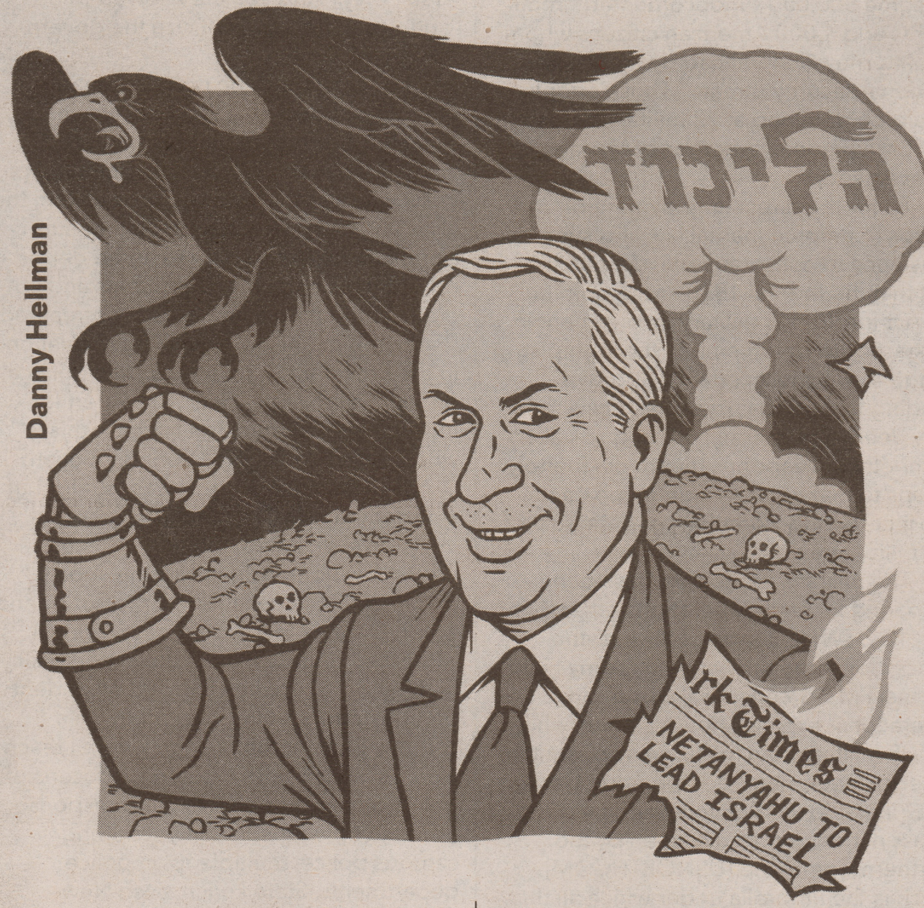
The players, the profits, the misery—that is the story behind world capital's plans for the occupied territories, and as we will see, even for Israel itself. In the present article, we look into the people behind Genie Energy and uncover the extensive overlap between U.S. President Donald Trump's closest associates in the first Trump administration [2017-2020] and owners of Genie Energy and its parent company, IDT Energy. The picture that emerges is that of destructive transnational capitalism which knows no borders or religion.

Howard Jonas: Big money in action

Genie Energy is an American company, based in Newark, New Jersey. The chairman of Genie Energy is "serial entrepreneur" Howard Jonas, who founded the company under the name IDT Energy in 2004 as a subsidiary of his original venture IDT ("International Discount Communications") Corp., launched by Jonas in 1990. IDT Corp. started as a telecom company that specialized in lowering long-distance rates by re-routing calls through its office in Israel. Jonas and his closest associates, all of them avid Zionists affiliated with the Orthodox movement in Judaism, have launched a diverse array of business operations having in common no single product, but essentially specializing in commerce between the U.S. and Israel. Jonas is also referred to as an "angel investor" who has capitalized a myriad of small startups on both the American and Israeli ends.

In the early days of Israel, individual Jews would make the aliyah, the act of emigration to Israel, with the idealistic intention of farming in egalitarian kibbutzim and nurturing the land where their ancestors originated. Indeed, there were many early Zionists who represented socialist and anarchist values, and believed that Israel would ultimately become a multi-ethnic society, seeking peace based on the highest standards of Jewish morality. These Israelis unfortunately have been driven underground by undisguised colonialists in the orbit of Benjamin Netanyahu, along with his U.S. allies, who are neither moral nor entirely Jewish. Zionist billionaires like Howard Jonas have jettisoned idealism and egalitarianism in favor of multinational corporatism prepared to poison the water and soil of Israel itself, not to mention depopulate the occupied territories, in order to suck the earth's last drops of fossil fuel out of the barren rock.

Howard Jonas' discount communications firm IDT next branched out into the energy business in 2007, with Jonas as its Director. IDT Energy started out as one of those energy middlemen who go door to door pressuring people into switching their energy supplier and thereby ostensibly lowering their rates, of course without giving them quite enough information. In 2018, IDT was ordered by the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs and Board of Public Utilities to reimburse N.J. customers to the tune of $1.36million for overcharges during the cold winter of 2014, having misled many to believe that rates being offered could not increase, when in fact, the companies had the same power to raise rates as big utilities.



Jonas took an "extended sabbatical" in Israel during 2008. In 2011, with Jonas still at the helm, IDT Energy was spun off as Genie Energy, originally with the same focus on retail energy in New Jersey as its parent company. The president and chief counsel for the new company would be IDT veteran and attorney Ira Greenstein, a man with untold political connections. It was around this time that Jonas made substantial contributions to Benjamin Netanyahu's primary campaign, running as the candidate of the right-wing Likud Party once again.

Jonas rapidly attracted attention as an American sponsor of the Israeli right wing generally. The Charitable Foundation of the IDT Corporation has been a regular donor over the years to the Jewish Idea Yeshiva in Jerusalem, which is a seminary devoted to propagating the ideas of Rabbi Meir Kahane, founder of the Jewish Defense League; the yeshiva appears (at the time of this writing) on a list of terrorist organizations designated by the U.S. State Department, but that has not been enough to cut off its American support.

Howard Jonas has also been a major contributor to the ultra-orthodox volunteer Israeli army battalion Netzah Yehuda (a.k.a. Netzah Heredi), which also appears on a list of terrorist organizations banned from receiving contributions from the U.S. Deployed in the West Bank, Netzah Haredi served as the muscle for some of the most violent elements among Jewish settlers seeking to displace Palestinians from their communities. In 2015, a member of the battalion was sentenced to nine months in prison by an Israeli military court for the electroshock torture of a Palestinian captive, and another to seven months for beating prisoners. After 78-year old Palestinian-American Omar Assad died in the custody of Netzah Haredi, the entire unit was transferred from the West Bank to the Golan Heights.

Ira Greenstein, Jared Kushner, and the Trump White House

Like Howard Jonas, Ira Greenstein is a generalist and not a specialist, serving as a corporate lawyer and generic executive in both the communications and energy business. He was the President of Genie Energy from 2011 to 2017, having served as president and counsel to IDT under Jonas previously. Closely tied to Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law, who was the head of the White House transition team during Trump's first administration, Greenstein served on Kushner's team as Deputy Assistant to the President and Strategist from the beginning of the new administration from January 2017 through March 30, 2018. He did not officially resign as President of Genie Energy until May 2017 - the Office of Government Ethics declined to certify his financial disclosure reports, due to "unresolved potential conflicts," which the Trump administration did not bother about. Throughout his year of service, Greenstein continued to hold $250,000 to $500,000 in Genie Energy stock. By the time of this writing [March 2025], we have all become used to this kind of thing; in fact it is kid's stuff as far as Trump 2.0 is concerned.

In order to understand the effect that the presence of the president of Genie Energy president on the U.S. president's transition team would have on American foreign policy, we need to present a timeline. **[Some of the following events are discussed in more detail in SHADOW #64]**

Phase 1:

Starting in 2011, just around the time when Howard Jonas and Ira Greenstein were in the process of spinning off Genie Energy from IDT, Genie Oil and Gas [GOGAS], an early incarnation of the company, began evaluating the potential for oil extraction from resources in the Golan Heights. It was not known at the time what actual potential these resources had or how much of it was in the actual form of exploitable petroleum and how much was shale oil in need of environmentally destructive fracking. At this time, a Strategic Advisory Board was being put together for Genie/GOGAS, whose members controlled 10%-11% of the capital, consisting of an all-star team of reactionary billionaires:

- Lord Jacob Rothschild from the British end of the old-money banking family.
- Media mogul Rupert Murdoch who controls Fox News, the NY Post, the Wall Street Journal and many fanatical Trumpite news sources.
- Former U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney [2001-2008]
- Former U.S. CIA Director James Woolsey, a right wing Republican from the Bush/Cheney days. He was also a member of the White House Transition Team for the first Trump administration, under Jared Kushner and Ira Greenstein.
- Republican Congressman John Sweeney, another member of the transition team for Trump's first term under Kushner and Greenstein.
- Congressman Jim Courter, the most conservative member of New Jersey's Congressional delegation and yet another member of the transition team for Trump's first term under Kushner and Greenstein.
- Investment banker Michael Steinhardt, who is also the founder of "Birthright Israel" encouraging mass emigration to Israel among U.S. Jewish students. He is a major donor to NYU and one of the chief promulgators of the on-campus repression against supporters of the Palestinian cause. **[See Bob Feldman's article on Steinhardt in SHADOW #64]**
- Several Democrats, including former Clinton administration Energy Secretary Bill Richardson, former Harvard President Larry Summers, and former Louisiana Senator Mary Landrieu, all of whom are staunch defenders of fracking, and have been involved in projects directly concerned with Israel's energy resources.

So we see three Strategic Advisory Board members from Genie Energy serving on the Trump transition team, in addition to Ira Greenstein, the president of and chief lawyer for Genie Energy.

Phase 2:

In February 2013, the Netanyahu administration granted exclusive 36-month exploratory drilling rights for a 153 square mile section of the Golan Heights to Afek Oil and Gas, the newly-minted Israeli subsidiary of Genie Energy. The Chairman of Afek was Brigadier General Efraim Eitam of the Israeli Defence forces, whose extensive record of human rights abuses against Palestinians we document in our Genie Energy article in **SHADOW #64.** Eitam is a settler in the Golan Heights, which is recognized by the United Nations as being Syrian territory. The vice chairman of Afek was long-time Jonas associate Geoffry Rochwarger, a member of the Israeli volunteer border guard.

The project faced a challenge in the Israeli high court that was brought by the Israel Union for Environmental Defense, which contended that the oil deposits are tightly trapped in rock and would require fracking to be commercially exploited.

Continued On Page 22

JTS-AIPAC-ADL-ISRAEL-COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY CONNECTION

By Bob Feldman

Six blocks north of the gates at Broadway and West 116th Street, that the administration of Tel Aviv University-affiliated Columbia University has been locking since 2024 (in violation of Columbia's 1953 easement access agreement with the City of New York to never block non-affiliated pedestrians from walking across 116th Street, between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue), is a school called the Jewish Theological Seminary [JTS], located at 122nd Street and Broadway.

As JTS' website [https://www.jtsa.edu] notes, JTS' "joint undergraduate program" with Columbia University" has been in place since 1954" and "allows college students to combine their studies at Columbia's School of General Studies with a second bachelor of arts degree at JTS's List College [an undergraduate school of the JTS]."

The Columbia University-affiliated JTS website also indicates that JTS general counsel Keath Blatt "is responsible for all legal matters pertaining to the institution and its affiliates in the United States and Israel," and that he was previously "the in-house counsel for the American Israel Public Affairs Committee [AIPAC]" lobbying group "and its charitable foundations," who "regularly interfaced with various government agencies" and worked with "government officials" on "legislative and policy initiatives at the state and federal level."

In addition to JTS general counsel Blatt, Columbia University-affiliated JTS's board of trustees, which is chaired by Alan Levine, a former chair and co-chair of the Lawyers Division of the UJA Federation and the Anti-Defamation League [ADL] lobbying group, has included, since 1991, a now 99-year-old Chicago billionaire named Lester Crown.

According to an article "The Crown Family, General Dynamics, and the US War Machine," posted on the Behind Enemy Lines website [https://behind-enemy-lines.org], "the wealth of the Crown family is derived," historically, "from their 10% ownership stake in General Dynamics, where" longtime JTS Trustee Lester Crown's son "James Crown is the lead director." The article reveals support for settler-colonialism and Israeli government militarism in Palestine by Lester Crown's father Henry, Lester and James Crown: "General Dynamics is a long-time supplier of weapons to the Israeli Defense Forces [IDF] and an eager participant in Israeli atrocities. In 2007, a $65-million-dollar deal bought 3,500 bombs for the IDF from General Dynamics; in 2012, $647-million worth of GD bombs were sold to Israel; and in 2015, the US State Department approved a $1.8-billion-dollar sale from GD to the IDF.

Given the historical involvement in AIPAC of JTS's general counsel and the historical involvement of JTS's board of trustees chair in ADL, is not surprsing that, even after it became evident to the majority of US citizens that the Biden administration's support for the IDF's post-October 7, 2023 military actions in Gaza was enabling the IDF to kill and wound tens of thousands of non-combatant Palestinian civilians (including thousands of children) in violation of international law, after attending a "March for Israel" in Washington, DC, JTS chancellor Shuly Rubin Schwartz (who, from 1993 to 2018, served as dean of JTS's undergraduate dual-degree program with Columbia University and Barnard College), posted "Reflections on the March For Israel" on the JTS website on November 16, 2023, which echoed AIPAC's and ADL's pro-IDF Gaza war propaganda line. The post stated:

"We needed to be in Washington, DC.... Yesterday, we came from across the country… to express our deep gratitude to our president for the comprehensive and extensive support for Israel that he and the US government have displayed since October 7. We came to demonstrate our steadfast support for… Israel… in the war… And we came to call attention to the insidiousness of antisemitism, which has resurged with a vengeance… For me and for my colleagues, it was also a day to be proud of our own JTS family… Our undergraduates… and our graduate-level students attended the rally in full force: undergraduates who have been courageous in… speaking out against pro-Hamas propaganda and antisemitism... We know, of course, that opinions differ on how the war… and its aftermath should be conducted…"

It is also not surprising that, after Columbia and Barnard antiwar and Palestinian solidarity student Movement groups (including supporters of the Jewish Voice for Peace) **[JVP - an American Jewish anti-Zionist and left-wing advocacy organization critical of Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories, which supports the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israel–Ed.]** organized campus protests, demanding that Columbia institutionally divest from corporations doing business in Israel and/or selling weapons used by the IDF and disaffiliate from Israeli institutions like Tel Aviv University (which performs weapons research for the IDF), etc., the JTS website posted a statement titled: "Chancellor Schwartz Responds to Protests on Columbia University's Campus," on April 22, 2024, in which JTS chancellor Schwartz, again echoing the ADL and AIPAC lobbying group's propaganda line, made false allegations of "antisemitism," stating:

"…We are both shocked and horrified by the unfolding events just blocks away on the Columbia University campus. Columbia and Barnard, which serve as an academic home for our List College students, are key allies in JTS's… endeavors… Despite this deep partnership, the events of the past week have caused many to feel vulnerable and anxious."

"…We maintain close communication with Columbia's Public Safety team, the New York Police Department, Columbia/Barnard Hillel, and the university administration…The morphing of what might be legitimate debate into the worst and most aggressive forms of antisemitic expression is horrifying for us… It must be unequivocally condemned… JTS… will continue to play an essential role in educating and addressing this intellectual and social ill. This is what led us to recently host an important convening entitled "Antisemitism and Allyship"… related to antisemitism…Over the past months [then Columbia University] President Shafik and I have been meeting… We will continue to… tend to all the ways in which we… can further this vital work of addressing the broader problem of antisemitism in our universities..."

In a May 2, 2024 post on the JTS website, titled: "Antisemitism, Resilience, and Leadership: A Video Message from Chancellor Schwartz," false allegations of "antisemitism" against students who protested against Columbia University's failure to institutionally disaffiliate from the economic, political and academic institutions of a foreign government whose military, in violation of International Criminal Court rulings and international law, is waging a genocidal war and committing war crimes, were yet again made by the JTS chancellor, who claimed in her message:

"…At JTS, we have had intimate experience with the antisemitic rhetoric, intimidation, and harassment that has become rampant on college campuses. We have been heartsick at the manifestations of these impulses on Morningside Heights, especially as they affect List College undergraduates who are also Columbia or Barnard students."

In addition, a May 9, 2024 post on the JTS website included the following fallacious text: "Two List College students were among the co-authors of a powerful letter signed by… most List College students… `If the last six months on campus have taught us anything, it is that a large and vocal population of the Columbia community does not understand the meaning of Zionism… Yet despite the fact that we have been calling out the antisemitism we've been experiencing for months, our concerns have been brushed off and invalidated.'"

In September 2024, less than 8 months before JTS-affiliated Columbia University's current president informed the administration of Donald "AIPAC" Trump that Columbia "has hired 36 special officers who will have the ability to remove individuals from campus," and "will appoint new faculty members with joint positions in both the Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies and… School for International and Public Affairs [SIPA]," and will "Advance Columbia's Tel Aviv Center" at Tel Aviv University," Zachary Goldman, a former special assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the Chairman's Action Group and policy advisor at the US Department of the Treasury, who focused on Iran sanctions, also joined the JTS board of trustees.

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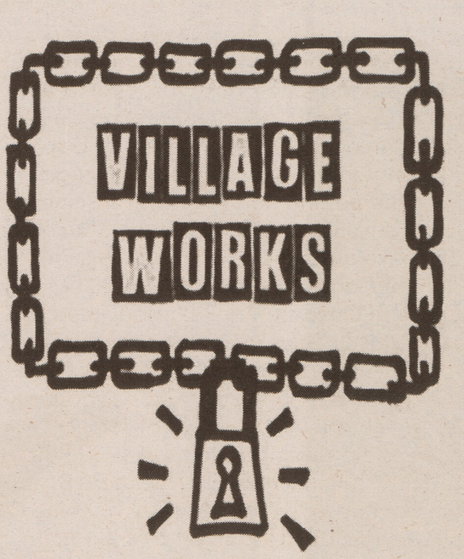

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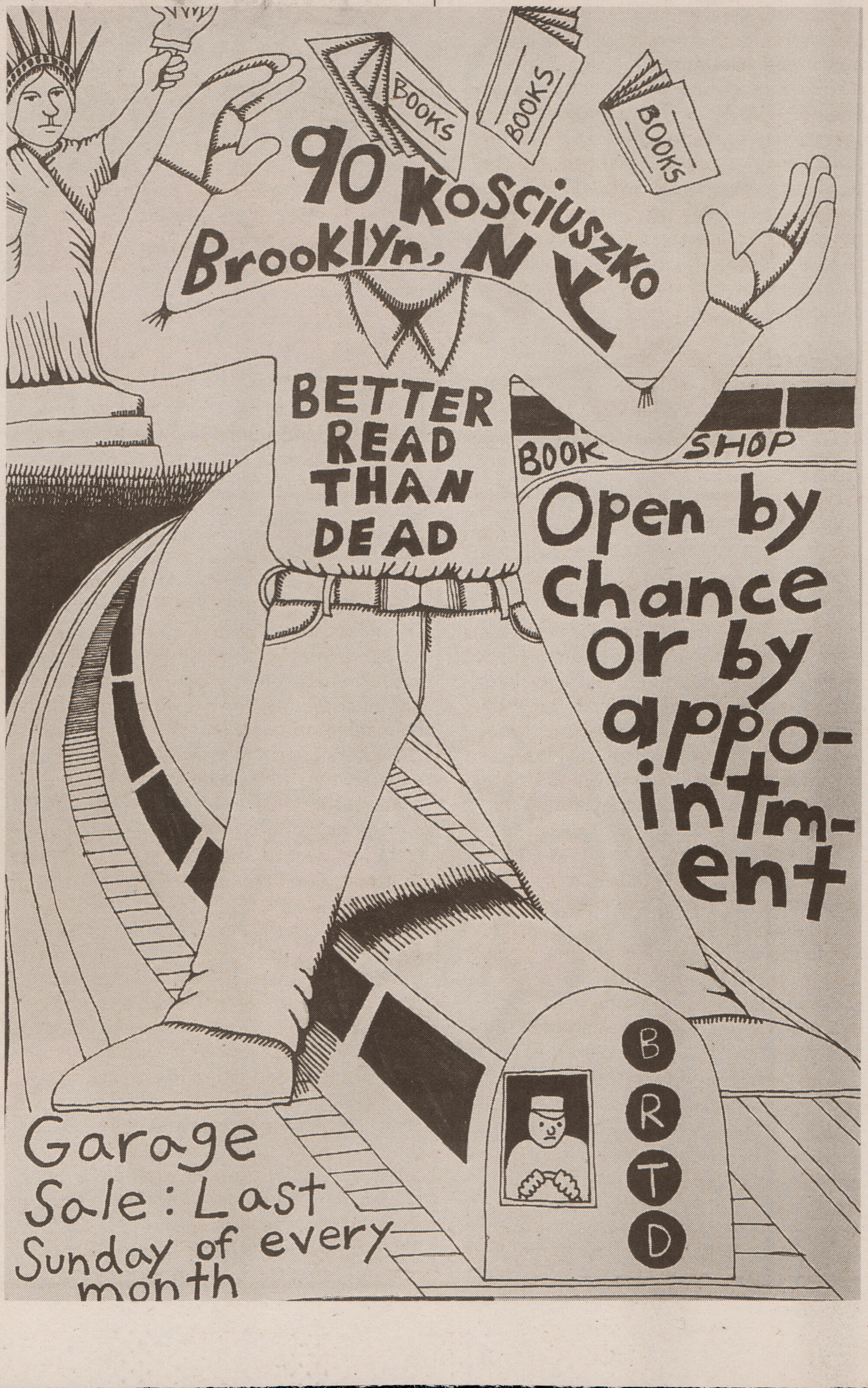
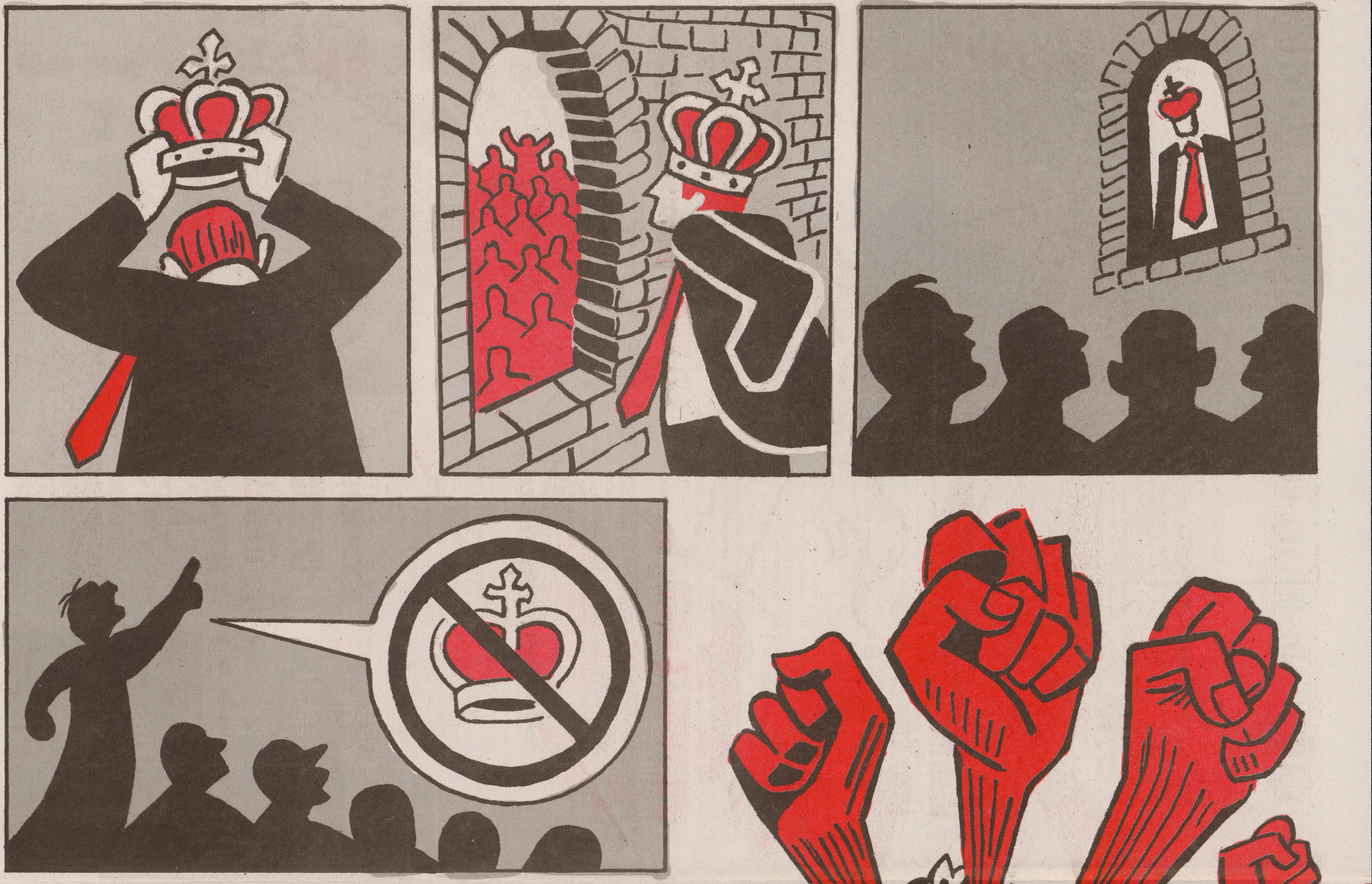
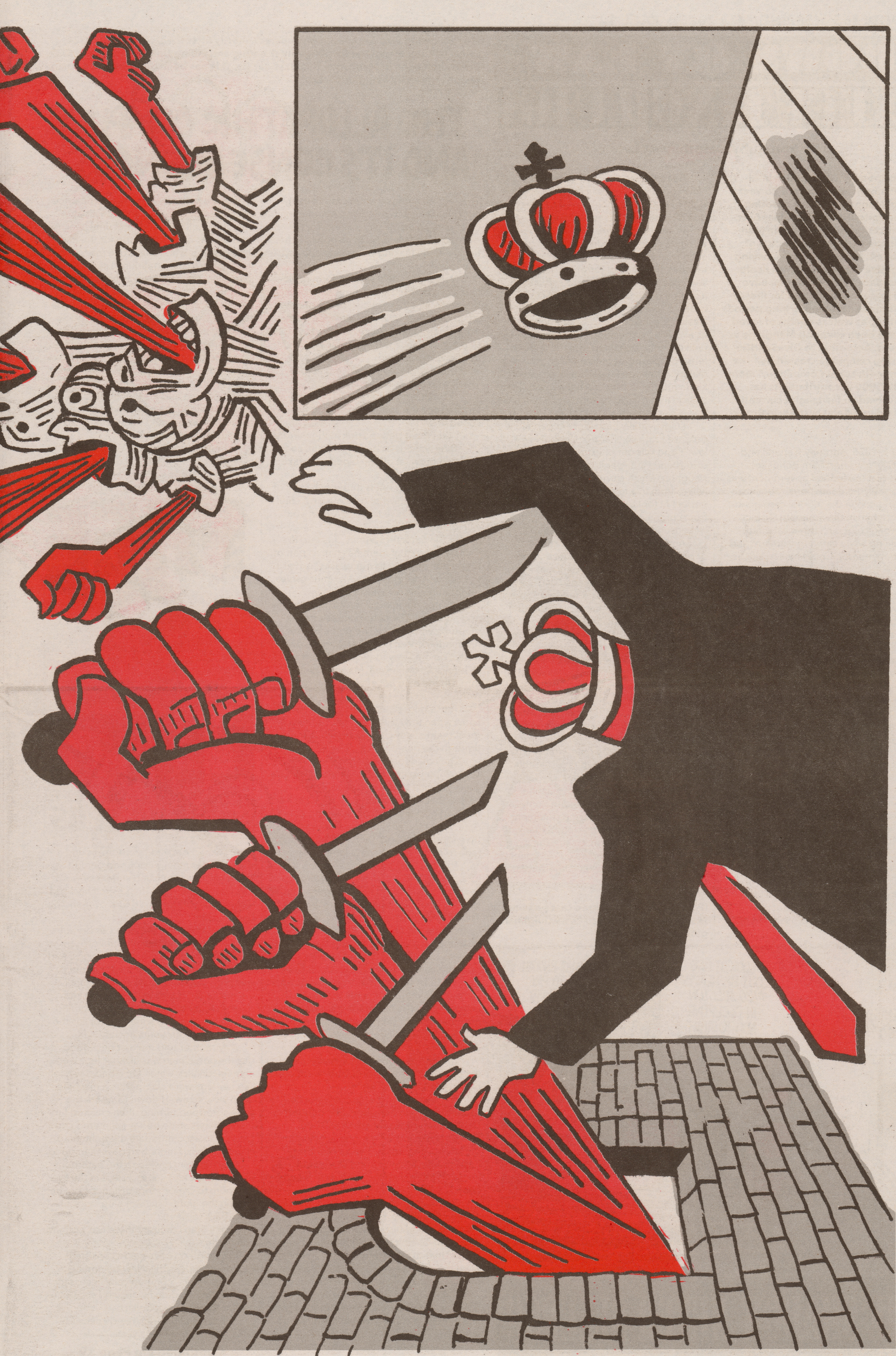






Seth Tobocman and Tamara Tornado

DOWN BY LAW

EXECUTING LUIGI

By Ron Kuby, Attorney At Law

[On December 9, 2025, police in Altoona, Pennsylvania arrested 26 year old Luigi Mangione for the shooting death of UnitedHealthcare Chief Executive Officer Brian Thompson in Manhattan in the early morning hours of December 4. Many Americans, having had negative experiences with healthcare insurance "providers" that have refused to pay for basic and for lifesaving treatments, resulting in long periods of suffering, as well as deaths of loved ones, have been cheering Mangione as a folk hero. According to GiveSendGo, a fundraising campaign created by "The December 4th Legal Committee," more than $827,000 in contributions has been received so far. Luigi is currently being held in federal custody in Brooklyn - Ed.]

On April 1, 2025, Attorney General and future FOX News host Pam Bondi announced that the federal government was going to seek the death penalty against Luigi Mangione in the federal case pending against him in the Southern District of New York. Luigi is charged with interstate stalking while carrying a firearm and committing murder. Could he actually be executed?

Nah. The current federal death penalty went into effect in 1988. Since then, the feds have sought it in the Southern District once—for Sayfullo Saipov. Mr. Saipov, you may recall, drove a rented truck onto the West Side Highway in 2017, slaughtering eight people—none of whom (as far as we know) ever denied a medical insurance claim to anyone. The jury refused to impose the death penalty. If they (we) didn't kill that guy, we are not going to kill Luigi. Southern District juries are composed primarily of folx from Manhattan, the Bronx and Westchester—with a sprinkling from Rockland and Putnam counties.

Such juries are not big fans of the death penalty. Moreover, a verdict of death has to be unanimous—unlikely from a jury that will probably contain at least one person who wants to give Luigi a civic award. But the feds have not yet even indicted Luigi, and any federal trial will almost certainly take place after his New York trial. Through a little quirk, the New York State Constitution prohibits a State prosecution for the same conduct for which the defendant was prosecuted in another jurisdiction.

Read that again. Yeah. In these cases, New York always goes first to preserve the right of the feds to come in later. If the feds go first, New York loses its chance.

In New York State, Luigi is charged with first-degree murder based on the allegation that this was a murder committed in furtherance of terrorism. It carries a sentence of life without parole. But such a charge requires proof that he acted in order to "coerce a civilian population." Healthcare insurance CEOs do not qualify as a "civilian population." So that charge is unlikely to be sustained. But the lesser offense of second-degree murder, your regular ole "fuck you I hate you boom stab" kinda murder is very much the appropriate charge and it carries a term of 25 to life. So that is not something to look forward to.

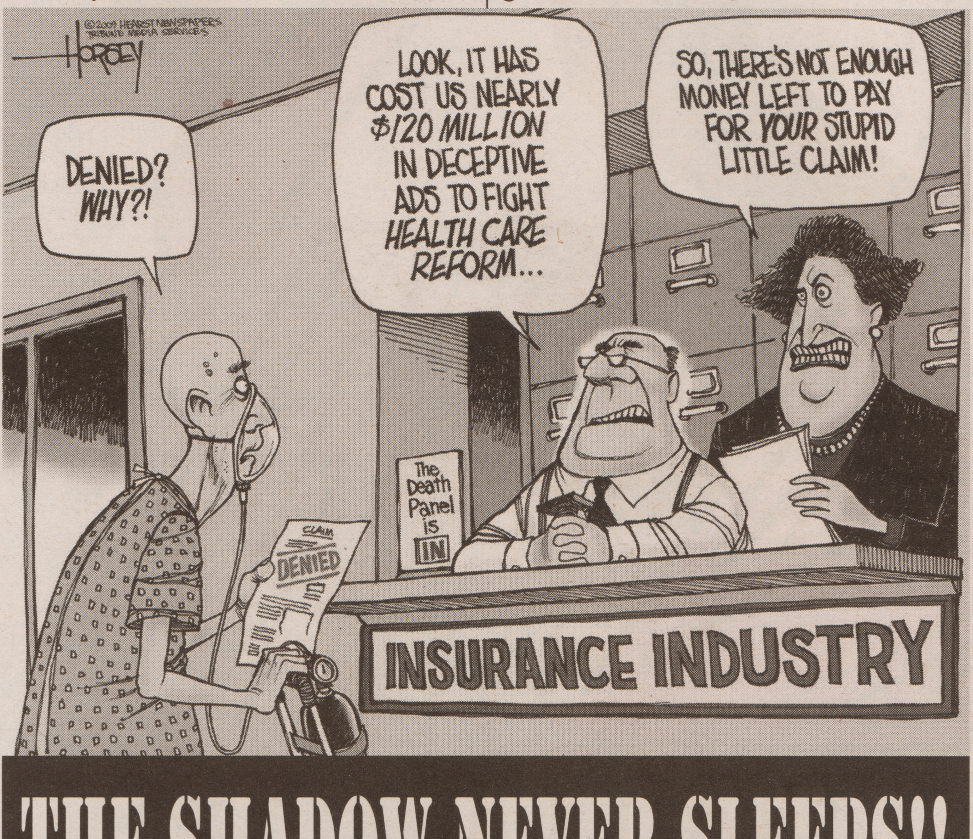
Luigi actually has a decent partial defense to these charges. Under New York law, if one kills out of extreme emotional disturbance, murder is reduced to manslaughter, which carries a sentence anywhere from five to twenty-five years. It is a perfect fit for Luigi—a young man, suffering from chronic pain and constantly fighting with insurance companies, just snaps.

And everything that Luigi knows or believes about the health insurance industry will come into evidence at his trial. It is a perfect political defense that is also a perfect legal defense. "One Two Three Many Luigis" will be chanted outside the courthouse while inside, Luigi can put out a radical anti-capitalist message that creates both sympathy and inspiration.

Or maybe. We really don't know much about Luigi's politics. Was his (alleged!) shooting of a health care insurance CEO a bold propaganda of the deed? Is he a latter day Alexander Berkman, but with a better gun and better aim? A libertarian nut job? A wildly attractive psycho like Ted Bundy? A tragic young man, wracked by pain, who lashed out at the most visible cause of his (and our) agony?

We have waited for him to define himself to us for months—and the only thing we got was an anodyne statement (written by his lawyers no doubt) thanking everyone for their good wishes. But we do know that, especially in the current climate, a show trial may not result in the verdict the State wants.

[For updates on the three cases against Mangione, go to https://www.luigimangioneinfo.com - Ed.]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THE SHADOW NEVER SLEEPS!!

[The following was discovered on Substack shortly after the December 9, 2024 arrest of Luigi Mangione for allegedly shooting and killing United Healthcare CEO Brian Thompson in Manhattan five days earlier. This has been described as a "manifesto" written by Mangione -- Ed.]

THE ALLOPATHIC COMPLEX AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

The second amendment means I am my own chief executive and commander in chief of my own military. I authorize my own act of self-defense in response to a hostile entity making war on me and my family.

Nelson Mandela says no form of violence can be excused. Camus says it's all the same, whether you live or die or have a cup of coffee. MLK says violence never brings permanent peace. Gandhi says that non-violence is the mightiest power available to mankind.

That's who they tell you are heroes. That's who our revolutionaries are.

Yet is that not capitalistic? Non-violence keeps the system working at full speed ahead.

What did it get us. Look in the mirror.

They want us to be non-violent, so that they can grow fat off the blood they take from us.

The only way out is through. Not all of us will make it. Each of us is our own chief executive. You have to decide what you will tolerate.

In Gladiator 1 Maximus cuts into the military tattoo that identifies him as part of the roman legion. His friend asks "Is that the sign of your god?" As Maximus carves deeper into his own flesh, as his own blood drips down his skin, Maximus smiles and nods yes. The tattoo represents the emperor, who is god. The god emperor has made himself part of Maximus's own flesh. The only way to destroy the emperor is to destroy himself. Maximus smiles through the pain because he knows it is worth it.

These might be my last words. I don't know when they will come for me. I will resist them at any cost. That's why I smile through the pain.

They diagnosed my mother with severe neuropathy when she was forty-one years old. She said it started ten years before that with burning sensations in her feet and occasional sharp stabbing pains. At first the pain would last a few moments, then fade to tingling, then numbness, then fade to nothing a few days later.

The first time the pain came she ignored it. Then it came a couple times a year and she ignored it. Then every couple months. Then a couple times a month. Then a couple times a week. At that point by the time the tingling faded to numbness, the pain would start, and the discomfort was constant. At that point even going from the couch to the kitchen to make her own lunch became a major endeavor. She started with ibuprofen, until the stomach aches and acid reflux made her switch to acetaminophen. Then the headaches and barely sleeping made her switch back to ibuprofen.

The first doctor said it was psychosomatic. Nothing was wrong. She needed to relax, destress, sleep more.

The second doctor said it was a compressed nerve in her spine. She needed back surgery. It would cost $180,000. Recovery would be six months minimum before walking again. Twelve months for full potential recovery, and she would never lift more than ten pounds of weight again.

The third doctor performed a Nerve Conduction Study, Electromyography, MRI, and blood tests. Each test cost $800 to $1,200. She hit the $6,000 deductible of her UnitedHealthcare plan in October. Then the doctor went on vacation, and my mother wasn't able to resume tests until January when her deductible reset.

The tests showed severe neuropathy. The $180,000 surgery would have had no effect.

They prescribed opioids for the pain. At first the pain relief was worth the price of constant mental fog and constipation. She didn't tell me about that until later. All I remember is we took a trip for the first time in years, when she drove me to Monterey to go to the aquarium. I saw an otter in real life, swimming on its back. We left at 7am and listened to Green Day on the four-hour car ride. Over time, the opioids stopped working. They made her MORE sensitive to pain, and she felt withdrawal symptoms after just two or three hours.

Then gabapentin. By now the pain was so bad she couldn't exercise, which compounded the weight gain from the slowed metabolic rate and hormonal shifts. And it barely helped the pain, and made her so fatigued she would go an entire day without getting out of bed.

Then Corticosteroids. Which didn't even work.

The pain was so bad I would hear my mother wake up in the night screaming in pain. I would run into her room, asking if she's OK. Eventually I stopped getting up. She'd yell out anguished shrieks of wordless pain or the word "fuck" stretched and distended to its limits. I'd turn over and go back to sleep.

FREE
LUIGI
DENY DEFEND DEPOSE
EAT THE CEOS

All of this while they bled us dry with follow-up appointment after follow-up appointment, specialist consultations, and more imagine scans. Each appointment was promised to be fully covered, until the insurance claims were delayed and denied. Allopathic medicine did nothing to help my mother's suffering. Yet it is the foundation of our entire society.

My mother told me that on a good day the nerve pain was like her legs were immersed in ice water. On a bad day it felt like her legs were clamped in a machine shop vice, screwed down to where the cranks stopped turning, then crushed further until her ankle bones splintered and cracked to accommodate the tightening clamp. She had more bad days than good.

My mother crawled to the bathroom on her hands and knees. I slept in the living room to create more distance from her cries in the night. I still woke up, and still went back to sleep.

Back then I thought there was nothing I could do.

The high co-pays made consistent treatment impossible. New treatments were denied as "not medically necessary." Old treatments didn't work, and still put us out for thousands of dollars.

UnitedHealthcare limited specialist consultations to twice a year.

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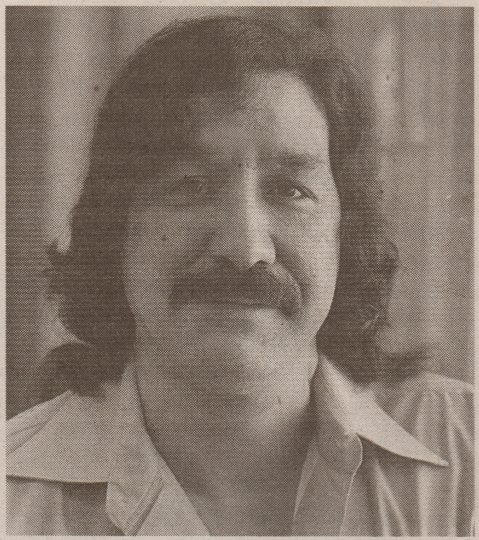
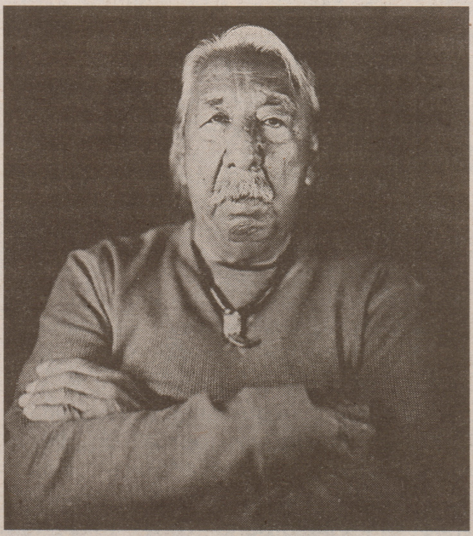
LEONARD PELTIER FREE AFTER 50 YEARS. GOVERNMENT CRIMINALS GO FREE.

By Paul DeRienzo





On February 18, 2025, after nearly 50 years of incarceration, Native American spiritual leader, warrior and political prisoner Leonard Peltier was released from a Florida prison from where he journeyed to his home on the Turtle Mountain Reservation, near Belcourt in North Dakota. A photo showed Peltier with his fist raised wearing an Indian style shirt. Convicted and sentenced in April 1977 to two consecutive life sentences, Peltier's sentence was commuted to indefinite house arrest by President Joe Biden on January 19, 2025, the day before Biden left office. Peltier, convicted of first-degree murder for the killings of two FBI agents in 1975, has always proclaimed his innocence.

New York attorneys Ronald Kuby and William Kunstler [RIP] represented Peltier during his appeals in the 1990s. Kuby told **The SHADOW** that Peltier is a "symbol of the injustices that this country has done to native people all throughout history," and while those injustices remain, "at least it stands as acknowledgment that has a concrete effect on real people."

When Peltier arrived at Turtle Mountain, the sunny Florida skies and 90 degree weather had given way to subfreezing temperatures and snow drifts. Pelter arrived to chants and drumming, tears, hugs and autograph seekers. Peltier, his voice halting with emotion, thanked the enthusiastic crowd of well wishers. He said the government had tried to kill him in prison, but he said that he never lost sight of the struggle for indigenous rights. "I made sure to bring these issues through my activism to people around the world." Adding to a few giggles from the audience, "I beat them, I beat the bastards."

Attorney Kevin Sharp, US District Judge for the Middle District of Tennessee from 2011 to 2017, who has represented Peltier since 2019, explains that Peltier's ordeal, rooted in the struggles of the 1960s and 70s, continues to be relevant today. "It's not ancient history because Leonard Peltier is standing here and can tell you the consequences of allowing a government to run amok," Sharp told **The SHADOW**. He says that Peltier's ordeal wasn't about the death of the FBI agents, but about larger issues of misconduct by police and prosecutors.

Anxious that there will be more cases of activists being targeted, Sharp told **The SHADOW**: "We got him home, but these larger issues linger out there. Issues of prosecutorial misconduct and issues of misconduct in the investigation," adding, "It's not how many times you get knocked down, it's how many times you get up. We say it because it's true."

Peltier's saga began on June 26, 1975, with a short but bloody gunfight on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, leaving FBI agents Ronald Williams and Jack Coler and Indian man Joe Killsright Stuntz dead. Stuntz was a 25 year old indigenous activist who had been at the Wounded Knee occupation in 1973 as an activist with the American Indian Movement [AIM]. AIM was formed in the spirit of other movements for liberation growing at the time, including the Black Panthers, the Young Lords, and Yippies.

Wounded Knee, South Dakota, was the site of a December 1890 massacre in which approximately 300 Lakota Natives were shot dead by the US Army's 7th US Cavalry after the assassination of Hunkpapa Lakota Sitting Bull by federal Indian police two weeks earlier.

In February 1973, approximately 200 Oglala Lakota and members of AIM occupied Wounded Knee for 71 days, protesting the US government's failure to honor treaties with Native Americans and demanding the removal of Pine Ridge Reservation Chairman Dick Wilson, who was suppressing political opponents with his private militia, calling itself the Guardians Of the Oglala Nation [aka GOONs]. Lakota elders had asked AIM members to help traditional people who were being victimized by pro-government forces on the reservation. The activists chose the site of the 1890 Wounded Knee Massacre for its symbolic value.

After the occupation, Lakota people who followed traditional ways were persecuted and murdered by Dick Wilson's GOONs, who were armed, equipped and financed by the US government and allowed a free hand to do as they pleased, with no repercussions. More than 50 of Wilson's opponents died violently over the following three years, until Wilson was removed from his position in 1976.

The precipitating incident in Pine Ridge? A Native man named Jimmy Eagle was wanted for having been in a fight and for allegedly stealing a pair of cowboy boots. FBI agents Coler and Williams were looking for a red pickup truck driven by Eagle, but instead followed Peltier's red and white van onto the Jumping Bull ranch in Oglala, South Dakota, unannounced and without a warrant. Freedom of Information Act documents revealed years later that a large group of heavily-armed FBI agents and Bureau of Indian Affairs [BIA] police were already in the vicinity.

Earlier in 1975, Peltier traveled as a member of AIM to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation to help reduce violence among political opponents. On June 26, AIM activists, including Peltier, were camped out near a stream on the ranch. Coler and Williams were outside their vehicles firing pistols, rifles and a shotgun in the direction of the Natives. Peltier was armed with an AR-15 rifle. He admits to firing in the direction of the agents in "self

Continued On Page 17

Defending Leonard Peltier: An Old Lawyer's Personal Reflections

By Ron Kuby

Back in the 00s, Lewisburg Penitentiary in Nowhere, Pennsylvania was a formidable, maximum security men's prison, where virtually everyone was serving a sentence that would insure they were confined well into their dotage, or until their deaths.

The building facing the public was a giant red brick thing that illustrates "looming," and I would check in there, walk through a sally port (a small corridor where one door locks before the other door opens), across a concrete courtyard into another building and another sally port where I would meet Leonard in relative privacy. When I finished my visit, I was repeating the process when a loudspeaker told me "stand on the square." I looked around. Again: "Stand On The Square," with slightly more asperity. And indeed, in the center of the concrete plaza was a white painted square–I dutifully walked over and stood there; I was then told I could proceed and exit the prison.

I did not really see the purpose of standing on the square, so I asked "why" as I left. One of the staff told me that it was done to confirm sure I was alone; the guard towers had a 360 degree view to make sure no one had a knife to my back trying to make good an escape. I then asked what happened if someone did. I was told that in such cases, the guards would kill the convict, and probably me, in a hail of rifle fire. Charming.

It was in that place, and other such places, that Leonard Peltier spent close to a staggering half-century of his life.

I think I was Leonard's most recycled lawyer. I had the dubious honor of representing him three different times: during the 80s, 90s, and 00s. An honor because it was Leonard, whose name and struggle was synonymous with political prisoners and Native American struggle. Dubious because nothing that I, or any of his dozens of lawyers did, succeeded in getting him out of prison. Starting with the legendary William M. Kunstler (who died after twenty years of being Leonard's

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THOUGHTS ON LEONARD PELTIER'S RELEASE

By Sarah Kunstler, Attorney At Law

"I have no doubt that at some point, sooner, I hope, rather than later, Leonard Peltier will gain his freedom.... I only hope that I live long enough to see Leonard free." -- William Kunstler, My Life as a Radical Lawyer

My dad, attorney William Kunstler, may have had faith that Leonard Peltier would one day be free, but nearly 30 years after he wrote these words, I don't know that I shared it.

Dad was not Peltier's trial lawyer, but represented him in appeals and hearings until the day he died in 1995. As he wrote in *My Life as a Radical Lawyer* [1994], "Leonard's conviction had been based almost entirely on the strength of one lie: that a .223 shell casing supposedly found in the open trunk of [FBI] Agent Jack Coler's car matched an AR-15 rifle falsely attributed to Leonard. But the files we obtained revealed that the prosecution had hid a report showing that this weapon could not possibly have fired the fatal shot because it had a different firing pin. This information came to light long after Leonard's first unsuccessful appeal."

A hearing was ordered, and it was revealed that the prosecution had further misled the jury by stating that there was only one AR-15 rifle at the compound when there were three. But the district court still refused to order a new trial. My dad and other lawyers appealed the decision to the Eighth Circuit, which affirmed the district court's denial, despite finding that the case demonstrated "a clear abuse of the investigative process by the FBI."

The Supreme Court declined to hear the case, and the legal effort continued, unsuccessfully, for decades.

Leonard Peltier was imprisoned for almost 50 years. On February 18, he returned home, to live out however much time he has left in home confinement. Not behind prison bars, but also not quite free.

And still a day I am grateful, as my father's daughter, to have lived to see.

Love to Leonard Peltier, Bruce Ellison, Ken TIlsen, Ramsey Clark, Nick Tilsen, NDN Collective, Kimberly Tilsen-Brave Heart, Mark Tilsen, Mark K Tilsen, Robert Boyle, Moira Meltzer-Cohen, and all who have worked so hard for so long to make this happen.

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JAMES EARL CARTER [1924-2024]

Georgia governor "Jimmy" Carter was a peanut farmer. He was also a member of David Rockefeller's Trilateral Commission, assigned to the US presidency in 1977 after un-elected Bush family protegé Gerald Ford finished the remaining presidential term [1974-1976] of disgraced fellow Bush family protegé Richard Nixon, who was forced to resign in August 1974 as a result of what was called the "Watergate" scandal, in which operatives of Nixon's Committee to RE-Elect the President [known as "CREEP"] were caught breaking into offices rented by the Democratic National Committee in the Watergate Complex in Washington, DC in June 1972. Several members of the break-in team were involved in the 1963 assassination of president John F. Kennedy.

At that moment in US politics, in the aftermath of Watergate and the extremely unpopular Vietnam War that ended officially in 1975, with abuses by the Central Intelligence Agency [CIA], National Security Agency [NSA], Federal Bureau of Investigation [FBI] and the Internal Revenue Service [IRS] revealed by the Church Committee, the Pike Committee and Rockefeller Commission in 1975, anyone other than a "republican" running for president in the 1976 race would have been acceptable to the American public, and those running the show knew it. Carter was the perfect person to act as a buffer between presidencies.

To his credit, as president, Carter tried to enforce a "human rights" policy on foreign nations, threatening them economically if they refused to play ball. He also tried to clean up the CIA by appointing as CIA director non-spook Navy Admiral Stansfield Turner, who tried to downsize CIA's clandestine arm. (Carter's first nominee to run the CIA, Ted Sorenson, who had been legal counsel, advisor and a speech writer for president Kennedy, was thwarted by then-Senator Joe Biden.) And, unlike most politicians, Carter tried to be honest with the American public.

Also to his credit was Carter's desire to decriminalize marijuana, with his stating famously: "Penalties against possession of a drug should not be more damaging to an individual than the use of the drug itself; and where they are, they should be changed. Nowhere is this more clear than in the laws against possession of marijuana in private for personal use..." Unfortunately, the Carter administration continued to spray deadly paraquat on Mexican cannabis fields in an effort to kill plants, poisoning pot smokers in the process.

Also to his credit, in January 1977, Carter issued a Presidential Proclamation that granted pardons to those who had evaded the draft during the Vietnam War, in violation of the Military Selective Service Act, from August 1964 to March 1973. President Nixon had ended conscription four years earlier, in January 1973, as an effective way to undermine the anti-Vietnam War movement. Carter's Proclamation, implemented by his Executive Order #11967, enabled "draft dodgers" to return home from other countries they had fled to and to come out from hiding within the United States.

In foreign policy, Carter signed what was called the SALT II [Strategic Arms Limitation Talks] treaty, with then-Soviet Union leader Leonid Brezhnev in June 1979 – six months later, on December 25, 1979, the Soviets invaded and then occupied Afghanistan for the following ten years. Carter signed treaties with Panama leader Colonel Omar Torrijos in 1977 that would hand the Panama Canal over to Panama in 1999. Torrijos was later killed in a 1981 plane crash, replaced by future US vice-president George HW Bush's drug distribution partner Manuel Noriega. When they had a falling out, Bush, as US president, ordered a military invasion of Panama and Noriega's arrest in 1989. Carter also brokered a peace agreement known as the Camp David Accords between Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israel Prime Minister Menachem Begin in 1978. They all signed the agreement, but Sadat was assassinated in October 1981.

During Carter's term, under the guise of "stopping inflation," the Federal Reserve jacked up interest rates from 6.25% in November 1976 to a high of 21.5% by December 1980 and reduced the money supply, bringing the US economy to a standstill. Carter's signing of the Federal Reserve Reform Act in November 1977 did nothing to improve the economy, for which Carter was blamed.

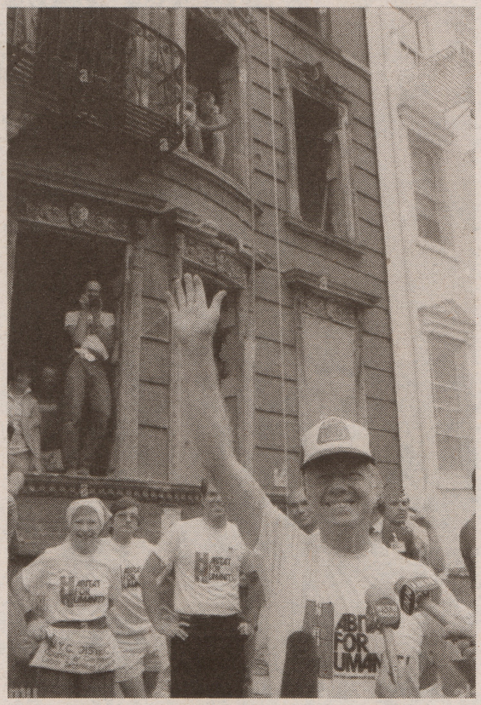
Then there was the "Hostage Crisis" of 1979. After Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, known as the Shah of Iran, the Rockefeller family's puppet dictator running that country with help from a US-trained and supplied police force called SAVAK that tortured and killed dissidents, fled Iran in January 1979 when his forces could no longer contain or stop the Islamic fundamentalist revolution brewing there, Carter accepted the Shah into the US in October 1979 under the excuse that only in New York City could the Shah get proper cancer treatment. The US embassy in Tehran was then raided in November 1979 by Iranian "students" who took hostages. (Never mind that most of the "hostages" were CIA employees.) The Shah later died in Egypt in July 1980.

Carter's secret military mission into Iran in April 1980 to retrieve the hostages was sabotaged from within, resulting in deaths of eight US service men. That failure caused Carter ridicule. While some hostages escaped with help from the Canadian embassy in Tehran, the remaining hostages, held for 444 days, were released on January 20, 1981, immediately after newly-elected president Ronald Reagan took the oath of office. Years later, it was revealed that the Reagan-Bush team, led by Reagan's campaign manager and spymaster William Casey, had cut a deal with Iran months earlier, whereby Iran would hold the American hostages until after the US presidential election of 1980, in order to prevent Carter's re-election. Within a week of Reagan's inauguration, his new secretary of state Alexander Haig signed off on secret arms sales to Iran, which was by then at war with Iraq (from September 1980 to August 1988), during which time the US sold weapons to both countries. Casey was deeply implicated in the resulting "Iran–Contra" scandal that centered around arms trafficking to Iran between 1981 and 1986, facilitated by senior officials of the Reagan administration, who diverted some of the resulting income to aid US-backed "Contra rebels" attempting to overthrow the elected government of Nicaragua, in violation of US law. Appointed by Reagan as CIA director in January 1981, Casey died suddenly in May 1987, just as he was scheduled to testify before Congress.

In May 1979, a "drifter" by the name of Raymond Lee Harvey [shades of Lee Harvey Oswald, accused assassin of president John F. Kennedy?] was arrested by the Secret Service in Los Angeles after being found carrying a starter pistol with blank rounds just minutes before Carter was to give a speech there. Harvey said he was part of a four-man operation to assassinate Carter and that he was approached by three Latino men staying at a nearby hotel who gave him the pistol, asking him to shoot it into the ground in order to create a diversion so that they could then shoot Carter from their hotel room during the distraction. Harvey's claims were investigated by police, who found a room in the hotel containing a shotgun case and three unspent rounds of ammunition. The occupant had checked out of the hotel room the day of the alleged assassination attempt.

It can be argued that the seemingly ineffectual Carter presidency of 1977-1980 was a set-up for the election of Ronald Reagan and the resulting scandal-ridden Reagan-Bush presidency, spanning 1981-1992, that de-regulated the US economy, resulting in the highest cost of living ever experienced in US history; that permitted formerly prohibited corporate mega-mergers that have resulted in most US media and resources under the control of a handful of corporate conglomerates; that compromised the FDA and USDA and EPA, among other gov't regulatory agencies, in order to allow for deadly drugs and tainted food to be sold to and consumed by Americans and to allow corporations to pollute the environment with impunity; that systematically dismantled US manufacturing infrastructure, encouraging and incentivizing companies to move jobs and factories overseas, where there are no environmental or worker safety protections, unions, or pension plans; that crushed the power of America's labor unions; that further empowered "the war on drugs" to include asset forfeiture without arrest or even accusation of a crime; that wiped out Savings and Loan banks throughout the US; that provided record reduction and removal of income tax on the wealthiest of Americans - all of which has virtually crippled the middle class in America, which appears to have been planned long before.

After his sabotaged presidency, Carter accomplished more as a civilian when he left politics. In 1982, he established the Carter Center to promote human rights, which earned him a Nobel Peace Prize in 2002. He also traveled around the world in order to conduct peace negotiations, monitor elections and to promote eradication of diseases.



Rosalynn (far left) and Jimmy Carter at 742 East Sixth Street

In 1984, Carter and his wife Rosalynn became involved with Habitat for Humanity, a Christian group dedicated to building and renovating and creating truly affordable housing across the US. The Carters physically and personally involved themselves in many such construction projects. On New York's Lower East Side, one example of their success is a 20 unit apartment building called "Mascot Flats," located at 742 East Sixth Street, that the Carters, with Habitat for Humanity and labor provided by future building residents, started working on in 1984 and finished two years later.

Carter also wrote several books, including two on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, in which he criticized Israel's treatment of Palestinians as apartheid. He faced intense criticism over his book "Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid," which led to members of the Carter Center's advisory board resigning in protest and "Anti-Defamation League" director Abraham Foxman claiming that Carter "was engaging in anti-Semitism."

In a 2008 interview, speaking about the conflict, Carter said: "The world community knows the basic principles of a solution. It's all been written out. The Arab countries unanimously—all twenty-two of them—have publicly announced that they would recognize Israel diplomatically and economically, if Israel will withdraw from the [occupied] territories and implement the basic United Nations resolutions. It will take a lot of influence – strong influence - from the United States to make both sides come to that point."

Jimmy Carter passed on December 29, 2024. He was 100 years old.

-- Chris Flash

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LEONARD PELTIER FREE

Continued From Page 15

defense," but denies having been at the scene where the agents died. Coler and Williams were both shot dead. Their cars had 125 bullet holes.

Judge Sharp told **The SHADOW** that allegedly purloined cowboy boots were not the true reason behind the FBI agents shooting at Natives on the reservation. "Land is money," and Indigenous people were pushed onto reservations and now the government wants the land back because of mineral and oil and gas rights. He says, "the Indigenous people were standing in the way." Sharp adds that the government justifies its unjust actions "by thinking of people as less than themselves, if not less than human, certainly less than the white European group that runs the country.

The firefight at the Jumping Bull Ranch is illustrative. Sharp says, "Within 10 minutes, you had surrounded the ranch with 100 plus agents and militia. You don't do that without knowing it's coming. Those agents may have gone up there looking for a kid who stole cowboy boots, but that's not all that was happening, nor could it be." There is a lot more to be learned about the shootout that killed Stuntz and the two FBI agents. "There are documents somewhere," insists Sharp, "there's still tens of thousands of documents that haven't been released."

Although about 40 people were at the Jumping Bull ranch when the shooting occurred, AIM members Bob Robideau and Darrel "Dino" Butler and Peltier were the only ones charged with the killings of the FBI agents. Robideau and Butler were tried in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where they argued self-defense, convincing the jury that found them not guilty. Meanwhile, Peltier had escaped to Canada, where he had family, and was arrested separately.

Seeking the extradition of Peltier from Canada, the US government presented Native woman Myrtle Poor Bear, who claimed that she was Peltier's girlfriend. Peltier had never seen her before. Poor Bear claimed that Peltier confided in her that he had a role in killing the FBI agents. That was enough evidence for Canada to send Peltier back to the US in February 1976. Poor Bear later testified she was coerced and threatened by the FBI into lying. Poor Bear's testimony about the FBI's coercion and perjury was barred from Peltier's trial. The jury was deprived of knowing the depth of the government's hatred towards Peltier.

Peltier's trial was moved without notice or legal proceedings to Fargo, North Dakota, a city with a long history of anti-Native animus. There are no existing legal documents available that mention why the venue was changed, except for a vague reference to agents worried about losing another trial in Iowa.

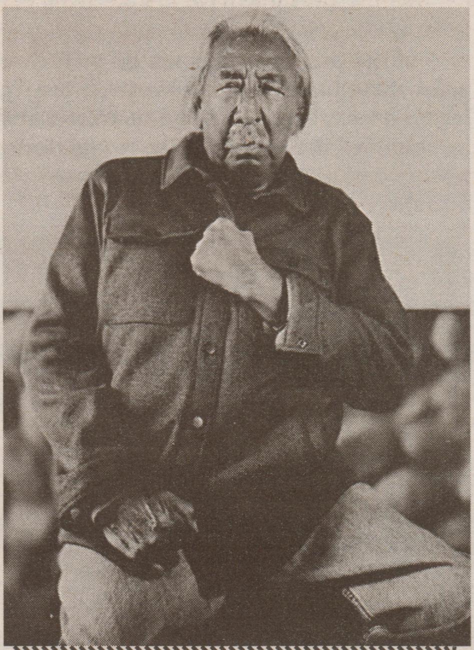
After being found guilty in April 1977, Peltier began serving two life sentences. On July 20, 1979, he was forced into an escape with two fellow inmates after he was transferred to California's Federal Correction Institution in Lompoc where he was warned by a prisoner of an assassination plot against him by the warden. One companion in the escape was shot dead outside the prison walls and the other was caught less than two hours later. Peltier was captured three days later, after which the government added seven more years to his double life sentence.

During his 48 years within prison walls, Leonard Peltier became synonymous with the fight against US official misconduct and hundreds of years of oppression and racism against Native Americans.

In a June 8, 2024 interview with Native News Online, Kevin Sharp explained that "Pine Ridge was a powder keg with the GOON Squad operating there with the government's help. AIM was there to protect those who were not part of the GOON Squad. There were many murders and assaults in a three-year time frame. When plain-clothed agents in unmarked cars arrived, a firefight ensued. Leonard did not shoot the agents, and the FBI knew this but withheld evidence. The court of appeals acknowledged this, but couldn't overturn the conviction due to legal standards. Judge Heaney, who wrote the opinion, later supported clemency for Leonard. Now, 38 of Judge Heaney's former clerks support parole for Leonard, including three who worked on his case. The government admits they don't know who killed the agents, but it wasn't Leonard. It's time to release Leonard and start the healing process."

Peltier's freedom was finally won by five decades of organizing and commitment by Indigenous people, activists and attorneys dedicated to winning justice. The government has never been held accountable for its role in the death of the two FBI agents and Joe Stuntz and probably never will be.

Recommended Reading:
- **In the Spirit of Crazy Horse (Peter Matthiessen, 1983)**
- **Prison Writings: My Life is My Sun Dance (Leonard Peltier, 1999)**
- **Agents of Repression (Ward Churchill + Jim Vander Wall, 1988, 2002)**
- **The Trial of Leonard Peltier (Jim Messerschmidt, 1999)**



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Defending Leonard Peltier

Continued From Page 15

lawyer), to Moira Meltzer-Cohen (who had not been born when Kunstler took up the cause), we did not win a single case.

Or maybe, possibly, we made more of a contribution than the law reports suggest. The legal team, over the decades, exposed rampant prosecutorial misconduct, from government-infiltration of the legal team, to the use of false statements to get search warrants, to hiding exculpatory material. Over the years, we proved that Leonard did not do what he was accused of doing—shooting two FBI agents at pointblank range while they were wounded. The withheld ballistics evidence proved that much. In the face of such proof, successive Justice Departments successfully argued that this did not matter—since Leonard was shooting at the agents who were shooting at him and his comrades, he could be held liable for the killing that someone committed. And so it went, over the many years.

I hope that these revelations played a part in the long on-going and long sustained solidarity movement around Leonard's cause. Multiple generations of activists cited this evidence as they refused to accept that Leonard was destined to die in prison. Perhaps, like water over a stone, the steady flow of petitions, legal actions, demonstrations, and pleas from the high and low profile ultimately eroded the walls that kept him from freedom. Or maybe it was just someone whispering the right words into the ear of one bitter, angry old man who enabled one genocide and perhaps wanted to do something to apologize for another. But Leonard Peltier did walk out of the prison in which he was told he would die.

Which brings us to this moment. We are told not to despair. I don't know why—despair seems a perfectly reasonable emotion to feel at this time. I have felt it many times in the course of Leonard's cases, and visiting it again seems familiar, at least. Rather, the lesson seems to be don't just despair. We don't and cannot know the ultimate effects, if any, of our struggle to make this world a fairer and more just place. We will go to our graves wondering whether we did any good at all. But we will have done what we could, in our era, to fight back. And we may be confident, if not certain, that things would have been worse but for our efforts.

THE TERRIBLE MYTH

"And that's the terrible myth of organized society. That everything that's done through the established system is legal. And that word has a powerful psychological impact. It makes people believe that there is an order to life and an order to a system. And that a person who goes through this order and is convicted has gotten all that is due him and therefore society can turn its consciousness off and look to other things and other times. And that's the terrible thing about these past trials, that they have this aura of legitimacy, an aura of legality. I suspect that better men than the world has known and more of them have gone to their deaths through a legal system, then through all the illegalities in the history of man. Six million people in Europe during the Third Reich, legal, Sacco and Vanzetti, quite legal, the Haymarket defendants, legal, the hundreds of rape trials throughout the south where black men were condemned to death all legal, Jesus legal, Socrates legal and that is the kaleidoscopic nature of what we live through here and in other places because all tyrants learn that it is far better to do this thing through some semblance of legality than to do it without that pretext."

- William M. Kunstler

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Article V: The Real Constitutional Crisis

By Frank Morales

"Sign our open letter to President Trump. Only an Article Five Convention can make his administrative changes permanent."
-- Convention of States website

Corporate far-right actors, spearheaded by the Convention of States movement, are driving calls for an Article V Convention in states across the country. Their aim is to gather enough willing state legislatures to reconfigure the US Constitution for their own benefit, providing sufficient cover to continue their plundering of America. If successful, their constitution will not only legalize dictatorship, but will most assuredly bless the racist theocratic ambitions of so-called white christian nationalists. And take note: their well-heeled campaign, bankrolled by the Koch brothers and other ultra-conservative fascist billionaires is getting closer to its goal.

Championed by a faction of rich donors and political extremists who want to operate without guardrails to institute their right-wing agenda, they are intent on, among other things, shredding First Amendment protections, gutting environmental regulations ("drill baby drill"), rolling back civil rights advances, repressing dissent with militarized police, and enshrining far-right economics as permanent fiscal policy, which will gut Medicare, Medicaid and other safety-net programs. Currently, only six states stand between us and a dangerous Article V Constitutional Convention, which will attempt to re-write the Constitution in the interests of authoritarian control, an event unprecedented in US history.

Two "senior advisors" of the Convention of States [COS] movement, the group leading the charge to trash our Constitution, are Jim Demint, former president of the Heritage Foundation, proponents of the odious Project 2025, which the ACLU [American Civil Liberties Union] called "a road map for how to replace the rule of law with right-wing ideals;" and Rick Santorum, former Senator from Pennsylvania and failed presidential candidate, who is a staunch devotee of Opus Dei, the rabidly anti-communist global Roman Catholic cult that supported nazi and totalitarian zealots during the first half of the 20th century.

The targeting of the US Constitution for a thorough re-working by such bad actors should give us all pause, because when the rule of law succumbs to criminal tyranny, our work becomes much, much more difficult, and dangerous.

Article Five of the US Constitution reads as follows: "The Congress, whenever two-thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose Amendments to this Constitution, or, on the Application of the Legislatures of two-thirds of the several States, shall call a Convention for proposing Amendments, which, in either Case, shall be valid to all Intents and Purposes, as Part of this Constitution, when ratified by the Legislatures of three-fourths of the several States, or by Conventions in three-fourths thereof, as the one or the other Mode of Ratification may be proposed by the Congress; Provided that no Amendment which may be made prior to the Year One thousand eight hundred and eight shall in any Manner affect the first and fourth Clauses in the Ninth Section of the first Article; and that no State, without its Consent, shall be deprived of its equal Suffrage in the Senate."

Under Article V, Congress is required to hold a constitutional convention if two-thirds of state legislatures (34 states) call for one. As of this very moment, corralled by the likes of the American Legislative Exchange Council [ALEC], the legislative workhorse of the far right, nineteen states have passed the COS resolution. In addition, eight states have passed the COS resolution in one chamber but not the other. They are New Mexico, Iowa, South Dakota, Virginia, Kansas, North Carolina, New Hampshire and Wyoming. And, as of this very moment, nineteen states are actively considering the COS resolution. They are Connecticut, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Texas, Vermont, Washington, and Wyoming. You do the math.

Now, take note: Article V establishes two methods for proposing amendments to the Constitution, the first requiring both the House and Senate to propose a constitutional amendment by a vote of two-thirds of the members present, a method that, since the founding of the United States, has resulted in thirty-three constitutional amendments being sent to the states for potential ratification, with the states having ratified twenty-seven of these amendments.

Alternatively though, Article V also provides that the Congress shall call a convention for proposing amendments upon the request of two-thirds of the states. This is the method that is presently being enacted by the oligarchs, a method of proposing amendments to the Constitution that has never been used!

Accordingly, with so much "unprecedented" shit taking place, constitutional scholars are debating issues surrounding this type of Article V convention, including whether Congress must call a convention upon receiving the requisite number of state applications; whether the convention can be limited in terms of amendments in any way, thus preventing a "runaway convention"; and whether and how Congress can control other critical aspects, like the rules of procedure and so forth. Given the make up of Congress under Trump, it is to be expected that such niceties such as rules of procedure and the like will most certainly conform to the law of the dictator.

As for ratifying amendments into law, Article V leaves it to Congress to determine which of the two methods the states must use in order to ratify a particular proposed amendment. Neither the Constitution nor Supreme Court precedent specifically provides guidance as to how the states should convene ratifying conventions, select delegates, or conduct the proceedings. The thirty-eight state conventions that considered the ratification of the Twenty-First Amendment in 1933 followed a variety of procedures.

Could our movement make use of the "un-amendable" clause in order to counter the wannabe dictator whose aim is to constitutionalize his authoritarian oligarchy? Could we organize to enforce the "un-amendability" of our rights and freedoms already enshrined within our American tradition, demand "hands off our rights" and defend the ends for which we fought a revolution? A revolution which affirmed that "whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness?"

Taking these words to heart, why not take our own amendments, amendments conceived by social justice and liberation movement organizers and activists throughout the country, amendments that seek to undo the ravages of climate change, to undo the oppression of women and people of color, amendments to extend workers rights, gender rights, to radically restructure our economy, to pay reparations for the enslavement of Black people, to disarm the Pentagon Inc and demilitarize the police, to criminalize all forms of weapons manufacturing, and more, much more; and bringing forth dozens and dozens of peoples' amendments to Congress, accompanied by a few million of the citizenry, empowered with truth and reason, the ultimate enemy of fascism, we could, by way of direct action and mass civil disobedience, realize "a revolution of values" (King), a revolution for life, for universal justice and neighborly love, a revolution in order to be fully human, and we can do so within a constitutional framework, articulated in a thoroughly revitalized New 21st Century Constitution of a liberated America!

In closing, Thomas Jefferson once said that "when tyranny becomes law, rebellion becomes duty," but I much prefer the immortal and prophetic words of the great Puerto Rican Nationalist leader Pedro Albizu Campos, who stated that: "When Tyranny is Law, Revolution is Order." I believe that about sums it up!

[See: https://www.commoncause.org/work/article-v-campaign]

DEMOCRACY UNDER SIEGE

By Frank Morales

"I venture the challenging statement that if American democracy ceases to move forward as a living force, seeking day and night by peaceful means to better the lot of our citizens, fascism will grow in strength in our land."
-- Franklin D. Roosevelt

Democracy is under siege in America. It has floundered under the power of the rich, the weakness of our bought off, elected "representatives," and the oligarchs' success in selling to the deluded masses, by way of a complicit media, their outright authoritarian rule. It's clear, the elite will no longer tolerate the exercising of our democratic rights and are engaged in an open, prime time dismantling of 'the rule of the people' along with 'the rule of law' in America.

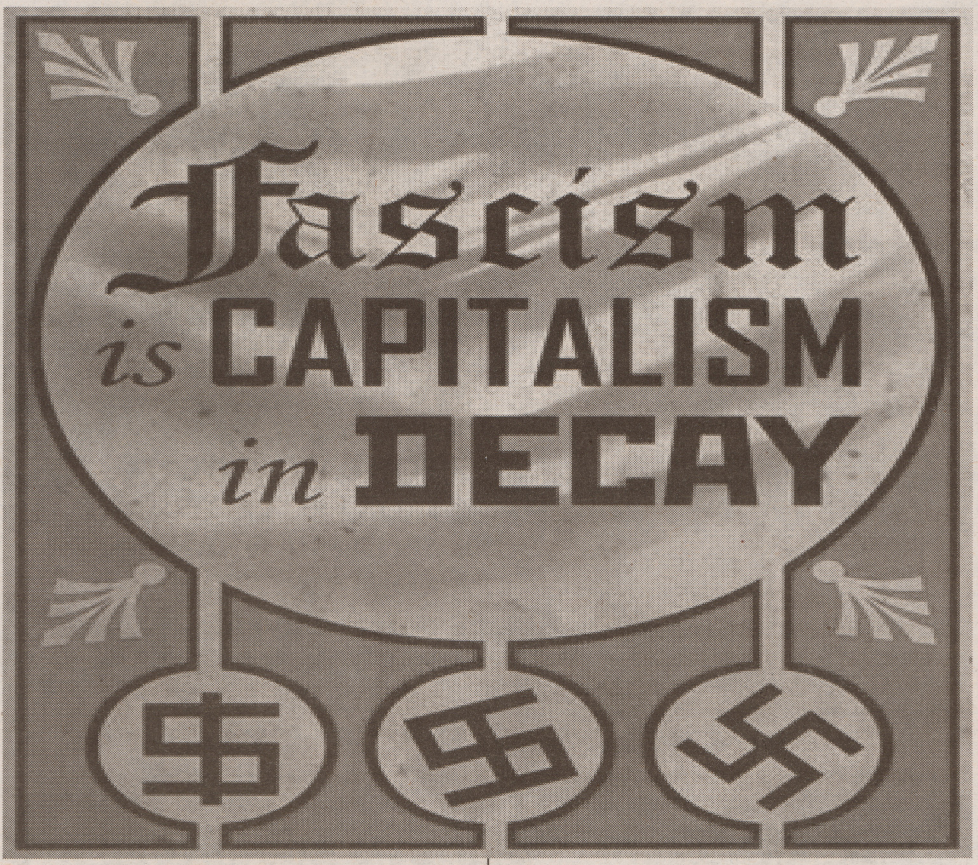
The conditions that comprise the foundations of democracy– including freedom of assembly, association, personal property, freedom of religion and speech, citizenship, consent of the governed, voting rights, freedom from unwarranted governmental deprivation of the right to life and liberty, and minority and migrant rights – are being wantonly ignored, mocked and destabilized under the authoritarian onslaught of the fascist trump administration, a racist criminal organization in control of the White House.

The attack on democracy in behalf of corporate rule has a long history. Back in 1975, following the revolutionary threat of the late 1960s, the corporate Trilateral Commission issued a report entitled The Crisis of Democracy. Authored by warhawk Samuel Huntington, infamous for his 1996 Clash of Civilizations, (which was all about "expanding the Cold War by other means" - Edward Said), Huntington made the claim, in reference to democracy, that "a value which is normally good in itself is not necessarily optimized when it is maximized." And that begrudgingly, the corporate elite had come to recognize that there are "potentially desirable limits to the indefinite extension of political democracy."

Indeed, Huntington promoted the view that the "problems of governance in the United States" (the rebellions and popular resistance of the period) stemmed from what he called an "excess of democracy." And in reference to the enfranchisement (voting rights) of Black people, Huntington wrote "that the effective operation of a democratic political system usually requires some measure of apathy and noninvolvement on the part of some individuals and groups. In the past, every democratic society has had a marginal population, of greater or lesser size, which has not actively participated in politics. In itself, this marginality on the part of some groups is inherently undemocratic, but it has also been one of the factors which has enabled democracy to function effectively. Marginal social groups, as in the case of the blacks, are now becoming full participants in the political system. Yet the danger of overloading the political system with demands which extend its functions and undermine its authority still remains."

In short, the lesson learned by the white ruling elite was that corporate rule and democracy are in contradiction. And that solving the "problem of governance" of the unruly masses could best be resolved by shrinking democracy. In effect, too much democracy was dangerous to those managing the power structure in America.

Hence, under the rule of wealthy capitalists, democracy has become the means through which the people defend themselves against these monied interests. And one of the primary ways we do so is through the power of voting. In the past, powerful elites have sought to restrict the right to vote in order to protect their privileged access to power. Today, trump and company are doing the same, seeking, in behalf of the oligarchy, to retain power that they see slipping from their hands because of a society that has over the decades become increasingly committed to equality.



Continued From Page 14

THE ALLOPATHIC COMPLEX

Then they refused to cover advanced imaging, which the specialists required for an appointment.

Prior authorizations took weeks, then months.

UnitedHealthcare constantly changed their claim filing procedure. They said my mother's doctor needed to fax his notes. Then UnitedHealthcare said they did not save faxed patient correspondence, and required a hard copy of the doctor's typed notes to be mailed. Then they said they never received the notes. They were unable to approve the claim until they had received and filed the notes.

They promised coverage, and broke their word to my mother.

With every delay, my anger surged. With every denial, I wanted to throw the doctor through the glass wall of their hospital waiting room.

But it wasn't them. It wasn't the doctors, the receptionists, administrators, pharmacists, imaging technicians, or anyone we ever met. It was UnitedHealthcare.

People are dying. Evil has become institutionalized. Corporations make billions of dollars off the pain, suffering, death, and anguished cries in the night of millions of Americans.

We entered into an agreement for healthcare with a legally binding contract that promised care commensurate with our insurance payments and medical needs. Then UnitedHealthcare changes the rules to suit their own profits. They think they make the rules, and think that because it's legal that no one can punish them.

They think there's no one out there who will stop them.

Now my own chronic back pain wakes me in the night, screaming in pain. I sought out another type of healing that showed me the real antidote to what ails us.

I bide my time, saving the last of my strength to strike my final blows. All extractors must be forced to swallow the bitter pain they deal out to millions.

As our own chief executives, it's our obligation to make our own lives better. First and foremost, we must seek to improve our own circumstances and defend ourselves. As we do so, our actions have ripple effects that can improve the lives of others.

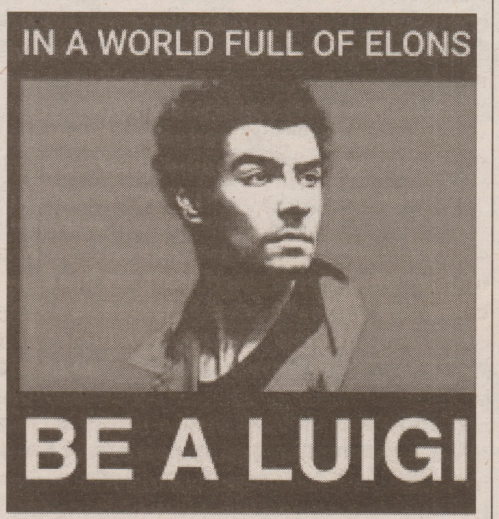
Rules exist between two individuals, in a network that covers the entire earth. Some of these rules are written down. Some of these rules emerge from natural respect between two individuals. Some of these rules are defined in physical laws, like the properties of gravity, magnetism or the potential energy stored in the chemical bonds of potassium nitrate.

No single document better encapsulates the belief that all people are equal in fundamental worth and moral status and the frameworks for fostering collective well-being than the US constitution.

Writing a rule down makes it into a law. I don't give a fuck about the law. Law means nothing. What does matter is following the guidance of our own logic and what we learn from those before us to maximize our own well-being, which will then maximize the well-being of our loved ones and community.

That's where UnitedHealthcare went wrong. They violated their contract with my mother, with me, and tens of millions of other Americans. This threat to my own health, my family's health, and the health of our country's people requires me to respond with an act of war.

END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VULTURE FUNDS BANKRUPT STORES

By Mary Geddry

It starts with a closing store. Joann Fabrics, bankrupt. Hooters, shuttering locations. Retailers disappearing not because the public stopped caring, but because someone, somewhere, quietly decided there was more money to be made if these companies died slowly under a mountain of debt. And as Americans watch their favorite shops vanish and their towns hollow out, most never realize the true cause isn't market trends or bad business decisions. It's financial engineering, executed with surgical precision by private equity firms, and silently financed by trillion-dollar asset managers who have woven themselves into every crevice of the global economy.

The story of Joann's and Hooters mirrors what we've seen in dozens of other industries. A private equity firm buys a company using borrowed money, loads that company up with the debt, extracts value through dividends, fees, and sale-leasebacks, and leaves behind a husk. Eventually, the company buckles under the weight. Chapter 11 becomes inevitable. Workers lose their jobs, towns lose their anchors, and the very firms that orchestrated the collapse walk away richer.

Coos County, Oregon, where I live, has been directly impacted by Joann Fabrics' recent closures. The loss of this store is significant for the Coos Bay community, as it served as a primary destination for crafters, quilters, and DIY enthusiasts. Residents have expressed concerns about the lack of local alternatives for purchasing fabrics and craft supplies, highlighting the store's role not just as a retailer but as a community hub.

But private equity isn't acting alone. The financing for this destructive cycle comes from the top: BlackRock, Vanguard, and State Street. Together, these asset managers control over $20 trillion in assets. That's more than the GDP of the United States. While private equity is the scalpel, the Big Three are the blood supply. They provide the capital through pension funds, retirement accounts, and institutional clients. Your 401(k), your union's pension, your child's college fund, these are the sources. The money fueling the collapse of Main Street isn't coming from faraway billionaires. It's coming from us.

And the system is designed to keep us in the dark. Asset managers claim they are passive investors. They say they don't direct company behavior. But this is a legal fiction, one that lets them skirt regulatory scrutiny while accumulating an unimaginable amount of economic power. Through their stock holdings, they quietly vote on board members, executive compensation, and mergers. They sit behind closed doors in meetings with CEOs. They don't need to bark orders. A nod from BlackRock is enough.

Take the fire truck crisis. In towns across America, fire departments are waiting years for new trucks. Existing vehicles sit idle because a proprietary part is backordered. Emergency response times worsen and fires spread. In California, as wildfires tore through neighborhoods, dozens of fire trucks were stuck in municipal boneyards, out of commission for months, because the parts to fix them were delayed or locked behind REV Group's proprietary repair network. These trucks weren't waiting on forest management or fuel. They were waiting on monopolized bolts and hoses. Why? Because a private equity fund rolled up nearly every major fire truck manufacturer and created a bottleneck, deliberately. They slashed production, standardized models, patented parts, and cut the workforce to juice returns. And just like with Joann's or Hooters, they were funded by institutional money managed by BlackRock and its peers.

The revolving door with government adds another layer of insulation. BlackRock alumni advise the White House. Former central bankers sit on its payroll. Larry Fink, the company's CEO, sought a cabinet position under Hillary Clinton and now shapes economic policy through proximity and lobbying. BlackRock isn't just powerful. It is embedded in the very machinery of public life.

When regulators tried to classify BlackRock as systemically important after the 2008 crash, the company doubled its lobbying budget. It funded metro ads targeting policymakers. It self-certified that it didn't pose a threat. And it worked. BlackRock evaded oversight while continuing to grow. Now, it owns 5% or more in nearly every major corporation. In Amazon it owns more than Jeff Bezos himself.

This isn't shareholder democracy, rather it's shareholder oligarchy. The top 1% now own over 50% of corporate equity. The bottom half of Americans? They own almost none. And yet their lives are shaped every day by decisions made by firms that answer only to profit, and only to each other.

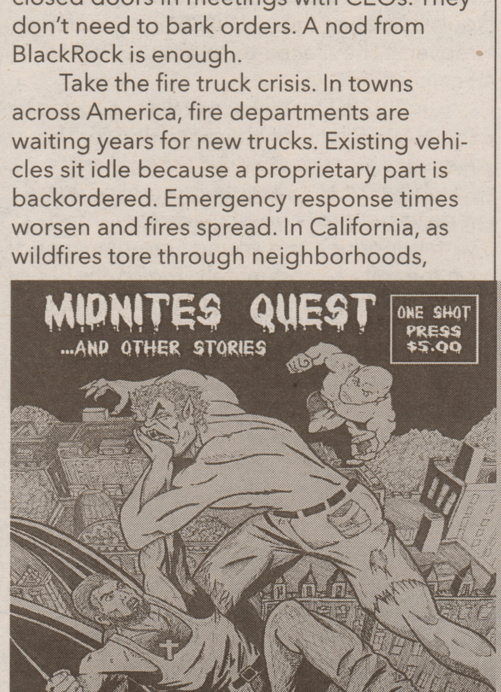
And that's where the illusion of competition breaks down entirely. When BlackRock owns big stakes in Nike, Adidas, Under Armour, and Lululemon, it no longer matters who wins. Competition is blunted. Prices are stabilized, high. Wages are suppressed, low. And the consumer pays more for less, all while being told the market is working.

This is extractive monopolism in a passive disguise. A system where the financiers who profit from destruction also fund the rebuilding. Where every fire truck, every shoe, every grocery aisle, every failing company is just another asset on a spreadsheet managed by a man you'll never meet, backed by your own retirement savings.

BlackRock doesn't own everything. But it controls just enough of everything to make sure nothing escapes. The money always flows up. And the collapse, when it comes, will be ours to clean up.

Until we recognize this system for what it is, a quiet coup of capital, we'll keep watching the fires burn from the sidelines, waiting for a truck that may never come.

[For more: marygeddry.substack.com and @magixarc.bsky.social]



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take the lowest end of the MIT ballot rejection rate, and only a tenth of the "lost" ballot rate, and then apply it to the number of mail-in and drop-box ballots, we can conservatively estimate that 2,121,000 mail-in votes went into the electoral dumpster.

Whose ballots? Democrats are 51% more likely than Republicans to vote by mail; and, given the racial disparity in ballot rejections, Trump's swing-state margins begin to look shaky.

The KKK Plan and the New Vigilantes

In 2020, the Palast Investigative Fund uncovered a whole new way to bring Jim Crow back to life: challenges to a citizen's right to vote by a posse of self-proclaimed vote-fraud hunters.

Four years ago, the GOP took this new suppression method out for a test ride in Georgia when 88 Republican operatives–remember, these are not government officials – challenged the rights of over 180,000 Georgians to have their ballots counted. These vigilantes based their scheme on the program originally used by the Ku Klux Klan in 1946.

One challenged voter: Major Turner, the same voter whose mail-in ballot was disqualified in a later election.

In 2020, the Major's ballot was challenged by the county Chairman of the Republican Party in Southern Georgia, Alton Russell. (Russell likes to dress up as infamous vigilante Doc Holliday, with a loaded six-gun in a holster.) In a (polite) confrontation we filmed between the Major and Russell, the GOP honcho admitted he had no evidence that Major Turner, nor any of the 4,000 others he challenged, should be denied the right to have their ballots counted.

Note: The Palast Fund contacted a sample of 800 of these challenged voters and found that, overwhelmingly, they were Americans of color.

In 2020, this KKK plan, adopted by the Trump organization, proved its value. In that election, Trump almost won Georgia, falling short by just 11,779 votes–only because local elections officials rejected most of the challenges. But for 2024, the Georgia's Republican-controlled legislature changed the law to make it very difficult for officials to deny the challenges.

That emboldened the Trump-supported organization True the Vote to roll out the challenge to every swing state. In 2024, True the Vote signed up over 40,000 volunteer vigilantes. The organization crowed proudly that, by August of 2024, they'd already challenged a mind-blowing 317,886 voters in dozens of states. By Election Day this past November, True the Vote projected it would have challenged over two million voters. In addition, Trump's lawyer, Cleta Mitchell, founded Eagle AI to challenge hundreds of thousands more, including in swing state Pennsylvania.

How many voters ultimately lost their ballots? Almost all voting officials we've contacted have refused to answer.

Placebo Ballots

Those voters who'd been challenged but mailed in their ballot would be unlikely to know their vote had been lost. Others who showed up in person at a poll would be told they could not vote on a regular ballot. These voters were sent away or forced to vote on a "provisional" ballot.

If you've been challenged or find you've been purged off the registration rolls, you'll be offered one of these provisional ballots, paper ballots you place in a special envelope. Typically, you'll be promised your registration will be checked and then your ballot will be counted. Bullshit. If you're challenged, unless you personally contact or go into your county clerk's office with ID and proof of address, your ballot goes into the electoral dumpster.

A better name for a "provisional" ballot would be "placebo" ballot. You think you've voted, but chances are, you did not, that is, your ballot wasn't counted.

Here's an ugly number: According to the US Elections Assistance Commission [EAC], in 2016, when 2.5 million provisional ballots were cast, a breathtaking 42.3% were never counted.

Think about that. Over a million Americans lost their vote – though, notably, not one was charged with attempting to vote illegally. And that was in 2016, before the vigilante challenges and before millions more had been purged from the rolls leading up to the 2024 election.

And here's the statistic that matters most. Black, Hispanic or Asian-America voters are 300% more likely than white voters to be shunted to a "placebo" provisional ballot.

The Great Purge and the Poison Postcard

The polite term in government agencies is, "List Maintenance." It's best known as The Purge–when voters' registrations are wiped off the rolls. The EAC keeps track of The Purge. It's a big business. For example, before the 2022 election, when the data was last available, swing state North Carolina wiped 392,851 voters off the rolls.

The majority of removals were based on questionable, indeed, shockingly faulty information that a voter had moved their residence. I'm not talking about the 4.9 million voters purged because they're dead, or eight million others whose residential move could be verified, nor those serving time in prison nor those ruled too crazy to vote.

I'm talking about a trick that has been perfected by politicians of both parties to eliminate voters of the wrong persuasion: the Poison Postcard. Here's how it works: Targeted voters are mailed postcards by state elections officials. (Let's remember, state voting chiefs, "Secretaries of State," are almost to a one partisan hacks.) Voters who don't sign and return the cards, which look like junk mail, will be purged.

The Poison Postcard response rate is close to nothing. In Arizona, according to the EAC, just one in ten postcards are returned. And in Georgia, the vote-saving response is barely above 1%. And that's the way our partisan voting officials like it.

Were the millions of Americans purged before the 2024 election all fraudsters who should lose their right to vote? Direct marketing expert Mark Swedlund told us, "This only means that most people, especially young people, the poor and voters of color, simply ignore junk mail."

With the help of Swedlund and the same experts used by Amazon–and believe me, Amazon knows exactly where you live--we took a deep dive into two states' purge operations for the ACLU [American Civil Liberties Union].

The state of Georgia had purged hundreds of thousands from the voter rolls on grounds they'd moved from their voting addresses. Our experts, going name by name through Georgia's purge list, working from special data provided us by the US Postal Service, identified 198,351 Georgians who had been purged for moving had, in fact, not moved an inch from their legal voting address. The state's only evidence these 198,351 voters had moved? They failed to return the Poison Postcard.

In 2020, I testified in federal court for the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] and RainbowPUSH, presenting our expert findings to get those voters, over-weighted with minorities and young Georgians, back on the rolls. Unfortunately, the Trump'd-up court system now gives huge deference to a state's voting operations, a trend which first took off in 2013 when the US Supreme Court defenestrated the Voting Rights Act.

The results have been devastating. According to the EAC data, before the 2024 election, 4,776,706 registrants were removed nationwide simply because they failed to return the postcard.

Also in 2020, the Palast Investigative Fund produced a technical report for Black Voters Matter Fund on a proposed purge of 153,779 voters in Wisconsin, a plan pushed by Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty, a group financed by right-wing billionaires. For Black Voters Matter, we brought back our team of location experts who proved, name by name, that the proposed purge was wildly riddled with

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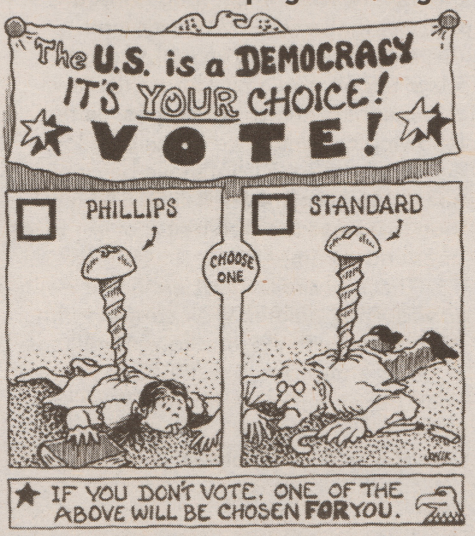
TRUMP-MUSK ORDER WILL COST 21 MILLION THEIR VOTE

By Greg Palast

On March 25, President Donald Trump issued an extraordinary Executive Order that would give, "the DOGE [Department of Government Efficiency] Administrator," that is, Elon Musk, access to the voter files of every state for the purpose of purging millions of Americans from voter rolls as suspected "non-citizens."

The Executive Order [#14248], with its Orwellian title, "Preserving and Protecting the Integrity of American Elections," will require every American who registers or re-registers to vote to prove their citizenship. The justification: Trump claims that the Democratic Party has registered three to five million non-citizen voters. But after four years of intense hunting by his Justice Department, they haven't found three.

The Brennan Center for Justice of the New York University School of Law warned, when Trump first suggested this plan, that "the lie of non-citizen voting... could lead to the purging of hundreds of thousands of voters from the rolls." But that statement wildly underestimated Trump's and Musk's ambitions. "Hundreds of thousands" could be purged in a single state.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The GOP isn't waiting. In a pre-dawn call, Gerald Griggs, the President of the NAACP of Georgia, told me that the Georgia Secretary of State is about to remove 466,000 voters from the rolls, notably, four times Trump's "victory" margin last year.

This follows Georgia's request for access to the Department of Homeland Security's immigration database – so Georgia can supposedly match its voter rolls to a list of non-citizens. Florida once used the DHS database to remove 172,000 "alien" voters. Only one (an Austrian Republican) was convicted of this crime – but thousands of "Luis Garcias" lost their vote. "We tried to warn you, America," said Griggs. "Jim Crow 2.0 has roared out of Georgia and is going national."

The Brennan Center reports that 21 million Americans, otherwise legal voters, don't have access to citizenship ID, a very low estimate. All will lose their vote if they attempt to register or RE-register (as 31 million Americans do each year).

Key Facts:

- **Only 42% of white Americans – and only 34% of Black Americans – have passports to prove citizenship.**
- **69 million women who took their husband's last name cannot use their birth certificate as proof of citizenship.**
- **Military ID is NOT proof of citizenship.**
- **A driver's license is NOT proof of citizenship (except in 5 states that permit you to add citizenship to the "Real" ID card.**

According to Barbara Arnwine, founder of the Transformative Justice Coalition, who taught voting rights law at Columbia University, Trump and Musk are trying to get around the 10th Amendment to the Constitution which requires an act of Congress to make these changes to voting law by putting the citizenship proof requirement into the national mail-in federal registration form. This was tried in 2016 by Kris Kobach as Secretary of State of Kansas, who admitted in court that none of the 36,000 Kansans barred from voter rolls were non-citizens.

The Executive Order also threatens the return of the infamous Interstate Crosscheck purge program. Courts had already struck down Crosscheck because it wildly tagged over three million Americans as potential "multiple" voters. Trump's order authorizes Musk's DOGE hounds to go into the voter files and cross check names between the states to tag potential double voters. But, according to Prof. Lorraine Minnite, author of The Myth of Voter Fraud, the chance of someone voting twice is far less than the chance of being killed by lightning. Nevertheless, a revived Crosscheck system would block the ballot to several hundred thousand voters.

But don't count on the courts, newly Trump'd, to defend your right to vote.

[Want to know more? Watch Vigilantes Inc., America's New Vote Suppression Hitmen, narrated by Rosario Dawson, produced by Martin Sheen and George DiCaprio. You can stream it at no charge at: https://www.watchvigilantesinc. com]

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TRUMP LOST

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errors.

Notably, we found that the purged was aimed almost exclusively at African-Americans in Milwaukee and at students in Madison. The non-partisan Elections Board agreed with us, allowing those voters to cast ballots, with the result that Biden squeaked by Trump in Wisconsin by 20,682 votes. (Note: It was not our intention to elect Biden, but to allow the voters, not some Purge'n General, to pick our President.)

Unfortunately, before the 2024 election, the Poison Postcard Purge accelerated. This time, a new Elections Board in Wisconsin (10 electoral votes) decided to use the same discredited purge list to knock off 166,433 voters which, this time, we could not stop. Kamala Harris lost that state by just 29,397 votes. In Pennsylvania (19 electoral votes), the Poison Postcards wiped out 360,132 voters, three times Trump's victory margin.

And before the 2024 vote, Georgia ramped-up the purge, targeting an astonishing 875,000 voters, earning it the #1 ranking for "election integrity" by the ultra-right-wing Heritage Foundation.

I saw the purge in action in Savannah, Georgia, this past October, where 900 Savannah voters, most of them Black, were challenged by one single "vigilante," according to voting expert Carry Smith. Smith, who wrote her doctoral thesis on wrongful purges in Georgia, was herself on the hit list.

And more

We haven't even touched on other ways that voters of color, college students and urban voters have come under attack. These include the rejection of new registrations and rejection of in-person votes as "spoiled" (i.e. rejected as unreadable), costing, according to the EAC, more than a million votes—rejections which our 25 years of investigations have found are way over-weighted against the Democratic demographic.

After the 2012 election, I was able to calculate, with cold certainty, that 2,383,587 new voters had their registrations rejected; 488,136 legitimate absentee ballots were disqualified, and so on. In that election, a total of 5,901,814 citizens were blocked from voting or had their ballots disqualified. These stats were based on the hard data from the EAC, which gathers detailed reports from the states.

Today, with new, sophisticated, and well-financed vote suppression operations, the number of voters purged and ballots disqualified are clearly far higher than the suppression count of 2012. Unfortunately, the EAC won't release data, if it does at all, for at least a year. We've put in Open Records requests to the states, but today's officials are stonewalling and slow-walking our requests for the data.

In no other democracy are the vote totals—or, to be clear, the uncounted ballot totals—a state secret.

America deserves an answer to this question: Excluding a boost from Jim Crow vote suppression games, did Donald Trump win?

From the shockingly huge numbers we've discussed here of provisional and mail-in ballots disqualified, the postcard purge operation, the vigilante challenges and so on, we can say, with reasonable certainty, Trump lost—that is, would have lost both the Electoral College and popular vote totals absent suppression.

By how much?

For those who can't sleep without my best estimate, let me apply the most conservative methodology possible, as I would do in a government investigation.

I've updated the 2012 suppression numbers with the newest available data. Not surprisingly, the suppression number has soared, in part because the number of voters has increased by 41.3 million since 2012. But principally, the votes "lost" also zoomed upward because of the massive increase in mail-in balloting by Democrats since 2012, and crucially, the effect of new Jim Crow voting restrictions. Given a minimum two-to-one racial and partisan disparity in voters purged and ballots disqualified, the 2024 "suppression factor" is no less than 4.596% of the total vote. Those familiar with data mining will note that there is some double-counting in the 9 million voters and their ballots disqualified that I cited at the top of this article. In addition, we must recognize that many voters caught up in the purges and challenges would have cast their ballot for Trump. Therefore, I've conservatively cut in half the low end of the range of the calculation of votes suppressed to 2.3% to isolate the effect on Trump's official victory margin.

In other words, vote suppression cost Kamala Harris no fewer than 3,565,000 votes. Harris would have topped Trump's official total by 1.2 million. Most important, this 2.3% suppression factor undoubtedly cost Harris the states of Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Georgia. If not for the wholesale attack on votes and voters, Harris would have won the election with 286 Electoral votes.

Tech note from a numbers guy—and Martin Luther King

Until the Elections Assistance Commission gets updated figures from the states next year (and, under Trump, I doubt we will ever get those numbers), 3,565,000 votes lost to Harris is the estimate I would present in my role as a forensic expert in a courtroom as the lowest conceivable suppression factor.

I rarely make a big deal about my own credentials but, since the election, the Web has been flooded by amateur, arithmetic-defying speculation about computer hacking and other unsupported twaddle. Best to stick to hard, verifiable data. And that's what I do.

For two decades, I was a forensic economist for government agencies including the US Justice Department; taught statistics at Indiana University; provided expert calculations of vote suppression for the ACLU, NAACP, and RainbowPUSH, and won the Global Editors Award for my data journalism on vote suppression measurements for reports done for Al Jazeera, BBC, Rolling Stone and The Guardian. The numbers you get here are exactly what I would present to a Federal court. In other words, kids, don't do this at home…calculating the "un-count" requires expertise.

I make this point for another reason: The theory that "Elon Musk messed with the voting machines" is, unconsciously, unintentionally racist. With few exceptions, these silly speculations come from those who simply ignore not just the millions of votes officially reported as suppressed, their theories also ignore the horrifically painful experience of Black people turned away from the polls.

Now here's the good news.

We saw that in 2020 when, despite extreme, even felonious actions by Trump supporters to block, challenge and disqualify voters and ballots, the theft by suppression was defeated.

That was the work of voting rights groups challenging these attacks. The work was done in the courts and, more important, in the precincts, re-registering the purged, challenging the challenges, "curing" disqualified ballots.

The road is long but victory is certain. After the 2016 election, the Palast team uncovered a cruel, racist purge program called, "Interstate Crosscheck" that cost nearly a million voters, overwhelmingly minorities, their rights. This motivated the Rev. Jesse Jackson to launch a campaign that successfully shut down Crosscheck. Unquestionably, Joe Biden could not have won in 2020 without the Reverend saving literally hundreds of thousands of votes. The point is, they can't suppress all the votes all the time.

In other words, Democracy can win, despite the 2.3% suppression headwind. And that's our job as Americans: to end the purges, the vigilante challenges, the ballot rejections and the attitude that this is all somehow OK.

Martin Luther King gave us our marching orders in 1965, in words just as important today: "Let us march on ballot boxes, march on ballot boxes until race-baiters disappear from the political arena. I want to say to the people of America and the nations of the world, that we are not about to turn around. We are on the move now."

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FRACKING THE HOLY LAND

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Although the court delayed the drilling for a period, Afek was able to go ahead with attempts to drill. The project experienced sabotage by Golan Heights residents, who, in one case, cut and blocked water lines at the drilling site - water is a necessary item for fracking.

In 2015, Netanyahu asked the Barak Obama administration to recognize its annexation of the Golan Heights - he also announced plans to boost the Israeli settler population in the Golan by a factor of four, to 100,000. Obama however continued to stick to the then U.S. position that Israel should withdraw from the Golan. In 2017, Afek announced that the area did not contain commercially exploitable quantities of oil or natural gas, and suspended the exploratory drilling. This flatly contradicted statements issued in 2015 to the effect that there was a billion barrel deposit present that could make Israel energy self-sufficient upon annexing the resource.

The commercial exploitability of the fossil fuels would be relative in the first place to the political situation, i.e., removing the increasingly unstable Syrian government, and, in the second place, to whether a fracking process would be necessary to get at oil or gas deposits stubbornly trapped in rock, instead of being propelled to the surface by their own pressure, like increasingly more scarce traditional oil and gas wells. Ultimately, the suspension of drilling by Afek was a confirmation of the warning by Israeli environmentalists that exploitation of the Golan Heights resources would involve environmentally destructive fracking.

Phase 3:

In 2017, with the new Trump administration in place, U.S. policy on Syria shifted in the direction of regime change. In line with the views of the multiple Genie Oil Strategic Advisory Board Members who were also participants in the Trump transition team—Woolsey, Sweeney, and Courtner, along with Genie president Ira Greenstein, the Trump administration cited alleged human rights violations by the Bashar al-Assad regime as an excuse to carry out punishing air strikes against Syria in April 2017, just three months after Trump's inauguration. The Trump White House also endorsed Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights in 2019.

Worthy of mention here is the propaganda role of the Atlantic Council, longtime advocates for regime change in Syria, which ran a series of articles in its publication The New Atlanticist, alledging the Assad regime's role in chemical warfare and other human rights abuses in Syria. The Board of Directors of the Atlantic Council includes three members of the Strategic Advisory Board of Genie Energy—Rupert Murdoch, Larry Summers, and Bill Richardson.

Geoffry Rochwarger and Harold Vinegar: Reclaiming the Jewish homeland and then poisoning it

Genie Energy and its alphabet soup of subsidiaries are in a running battle with environmentalists in Israel itself, not just in the occupied territories, over the issue of fracking. Genie Energy's Chief Scientist, Harold Vinegar, is the inventor of a fracking technique that is more hazardous to the groundwater than regular fracking and which requires a far higher input of energy to obtain fossil fuel, though in Vinegar's worldview, it is key to Israel's energy independence. Like "terrorism," "energy independence" is another phrase used by the 1% to hypnotize and weaponize the 99%, making them a danger to other people and ultimately themselves.

Like the other Genie Energy players mentioned here, Geoffrey Rochwarger has floated between executive positions at IDT and Genie Energy for decades, holding the titles of CEO and Corporate Officer/Principal. Along with Jonas, he is regarded as a founder of IDT. Rochwarger is also a jack of all trades, being the co-owner of a trans-national winery with branches in California and in Israel. He is a trans-national U.S./Israeli businessman who supports his pet militia, in this case Yatar, which is essentially a unit of volunteer vigilantes guarding Israel's borders. Yatar raises money throughout the U.S. - you will usually see it represented online as a charity. These charitable contributions have equipped Yatar with the latest military equipment, including advanced all-terrain vehicles. Rochwarger himself has served as a volunteer for the Israel Border Police.

As the vice chairman of Afek Oil, the Israeli subsidiary of Genie, Rochwarger coined the slogan "energy independence is the new Zionism." Not only does he have his sights set on the resources of occupied territories like the Golan Heights, he has experimented with the controversial new fracking technique developed by his associate, Genie Chief Scientist Harold Vinegar.

The technique, known as in situ thermal recovery, uses heated water containing a proprietary list of chemicals to convert organic matter deep within the earth that is not quite fossil fuel into oil and gas in a matter of a few years, a process normally taking millions of years. Vinegar and his associates at Afek, including Geoffrey Rochwarger, have been experimenting with the process within Israel itself, dangerously close to that country's scarce water resources.

Israel has been called the Saudi Arabia of shale oil. Israel's shale oil deposits were formed about 100 million years ago from the phytoplankton that once floated in a prehistoric sea. This organic matter is mainly in the form of kerogen, a tar-like substance which is no longer plant matter, but not yet quite oil or gas. Vinegar's technique would pump tens of thousands of liters of very hot water into the spaces between the layers of shale using so-called "heater wells," cooking the kerogen for three years so that it turns into oil and liquifies, and then pumping additional pressure to bring it to the surface. Shale deposits are complex; pressure can easily push the liquid containing the fossil fuel through the layers sideways into the groundwater or a lake. That is a problem with fracking generally, but Vinegar's technique uses a lot of water and a lot of heat and pressure. Israel has limited water resources and has been draining off water from the occupied territories to supplement its own, inflicting much damage on Palestinian agriculture.

Now wearing the hat of yet another Genie subsidiary, Israel Energy Initiatives [IEI], in 2014, Geoffrey Rochwarger proposed the very first application of Vinegar's in situ thermal recovery fracking technique in Beit Shemesh, which is part of greater Jerusalem and a short distance from the Sea of Galilee, which is not a sea but a freshwater lake. The Sea of Galilee has supplied water to Israel/Palestine for millenia and is vital to human survival in that region. In spite of the chauvinistic propaganda of Genie Energy's corporate Zionists, the ultra-orthodox Jews of Beit Shemesh and their more secular neighbors united in a common movement against Rochwarger's project, and the Jerusalem city council rejected the project.

People are Life: Fossil Fuel is Death

With the fall of Syria's Assad regime, exploitation of the oil resources of the Golan Heights via fracking may become more economically feasible. In general though, we see the Netanyahu regime, which now fits hand and glove with the new regime in Washington DC, becoming more and more obsessed with stripping the occupied territories of Palestinian people. Is the motivation for this simply Trumpian nationalism or Zionist ideology? Or is there a deeper motivation, i.e., are the inhabitants of the occupied territories in the way of something profitable? Are living humans being driven out so that some dead plankton, part of of the last fossil fuel on earth, can be extracted using the most extreme and risky techniques?

Poison is poison for the Jew or the gentile, but for the super-rich, poison is profit.

COLLUSION

Continued From Page 9

of our students." But simultaneously, the University recently created a new disciplinary committee with the creepily banal name "Office of Institutional Equity," solely for the purpose of targeting students who have taken a stand against Israel's policy in Gaza. One student, Maryam Alwan, was told she was engaging in "discriminatory harassment" for writing an Op-Ed in the student newspaper advocating divestment from Israel.

Got that? One of the United States' premiere institutions of higher education is investigating and punishing students for expressing political opinions—in this case, in a news publication, of all places—a brazen attack not only on freedom of speech, but freedom of the press as well. Other students have received notices for sharing the wrong social media posts or joining "unauthorized protests." So, Columbia University is now collaborating with federal political power to control what its own students are allowed to say about, of all things, the policy of another country. Could this have something to do with the Trump Administration canceling $400 million worth of federal funding for the University? Hmmm.

But what about the right to due process? Yep, Khalil was whisked away by ICE without charge, and for a while his location was entirely unknown. Trump can't do that, you say, what a crazy fascist! Oh yes he fucking can, darlings.

Remember that little old National Defense Authorization Act [NDAA] some of us were warning about wayyyyy back in 2012, during the tenure of that great liberal Democrat Barack Obama, which declared that US citizens (never mind legal foreigners with a green card) could be held indefinitely, without charge or trial, if they were merely suspected of "providing support" to those "engaged in hostilities" against the US? Well, if your Gaza protest is declared by the Department of Homeland Security to be "aligned to Hamas," which happens to be on the United States' official list of terrorist organizations, then voilà! You are "supporting terrorism," loser. See ya! Wouldn't want to be ya!

Do you see how it works yet? Over time and from administration to administration, the so-called "left" and "right" factions of ruling class power work together, building mechanisms of oppression through executive orders, outside of the legislative process, which are then codified and picked up by the next faction, where they are dutifully used and expanded. Lather, rinse, repeat. The truth is we are already living in a fascist society, and have been for quite some time. The false good/evil binary embedded in the propaganda that pounds our skulls daily is used to ruthlessly and efficiently divide the populace into irreconcilable camps on nearly every issue of importance, thus neutralizing the capacity of the citizens to unite around common interests. The level of control is extraordinary.

Friends, the bedrock principles around which we should unite are already right there, in the First Amendment. Without those, we have no rights. Without those, there is no true resistance, and certainly no democracy. Speech is foundational. To support speech only when you agree with it, is to support oppression and control by whoever is in charge. Until both "sides" can come together on these foundational principles, we will be hopelessly divided, easily corralled and contained, and destined to live under an increasingly authoritarian and restrictive political regime.

So yes, we should resist. But be clear: the thing we are resisting is much, much bigger than Trump.

IF MARTIAL LAW COMES

Continued From Page 9

whatever form suits you! And band together with others to block, through non-violent civil disobedience, the ICE assaults of our immigrant friends and neighbors.

Get passage of Posse Comitatus-like legislation on state and municipal levels, banning the use of troops and military weaponry designed to suppress dissent, cutting all municipal ties to the "1033 program," which facilitates Pentagon Inc military weapons transfers to the NYPD.

Pressure New York Governor Hochul to resist calls for martial law from the Trump White House and demand that she prohibit (which she can lawfully do) the use of New York state national guard troops in suppressing dissent.

Pressure the NYPD to strip the resources of the NYPDs' "Strategic Response Group," the unit tasked with suppressing dissent, who have a history of brutality targeting lawful protest, especially in communities of color.

Organize local NYC ballot initiatives and make new laws designed to limit the ability of the police to brutalize protestors, and pass laws to eliminate police use of "qualified immunity" - a defense utilized by brutal cops to avoid being sued personally for their criminal behavior.

Research, identify and block NYPD purchases of so called "non-lethal" weaponry, including tear gas and rubber bullets, inventories that are delineated in public contracts between police and weapons suppliers who are also targets of public protest.

Organize massive free speech assemblages, step up anti-Trump, anti-authoritarian, anti-fascist, and anti-racist propaganda, paper the streets with posters and art calling for free thought, free expression and dissent, calling on the public to resist further moves towards martial law, '"girding the loins" of the public to fight back!

Call on religious and faith leaders to take public stands against the creeping martial law and boldly express moral outrage and opposition while pressuring government officials to resist the authoritarian pretensions of buffoons in high places.

The threat of martial law, like so much else in maga world, is a sign of elite desperation. Or as the Palestinians say, "the paranoia of the thief." So, rise up and resist any and all attempts, declared or otherwise, to suppress and repress our freedom!

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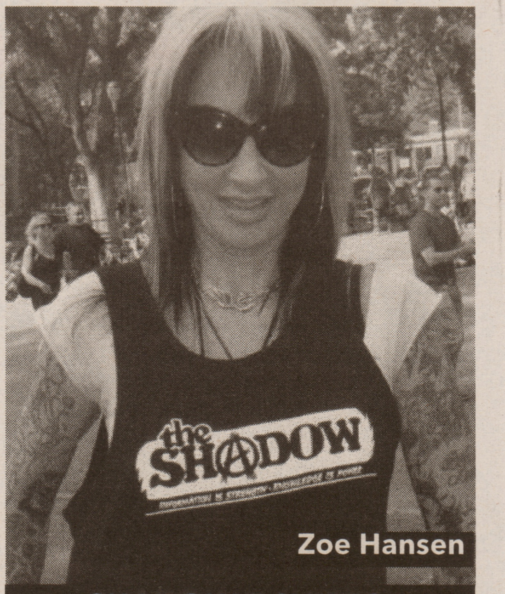
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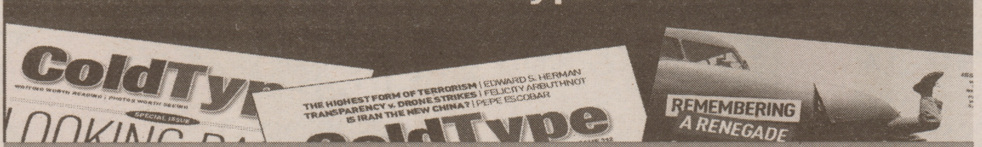
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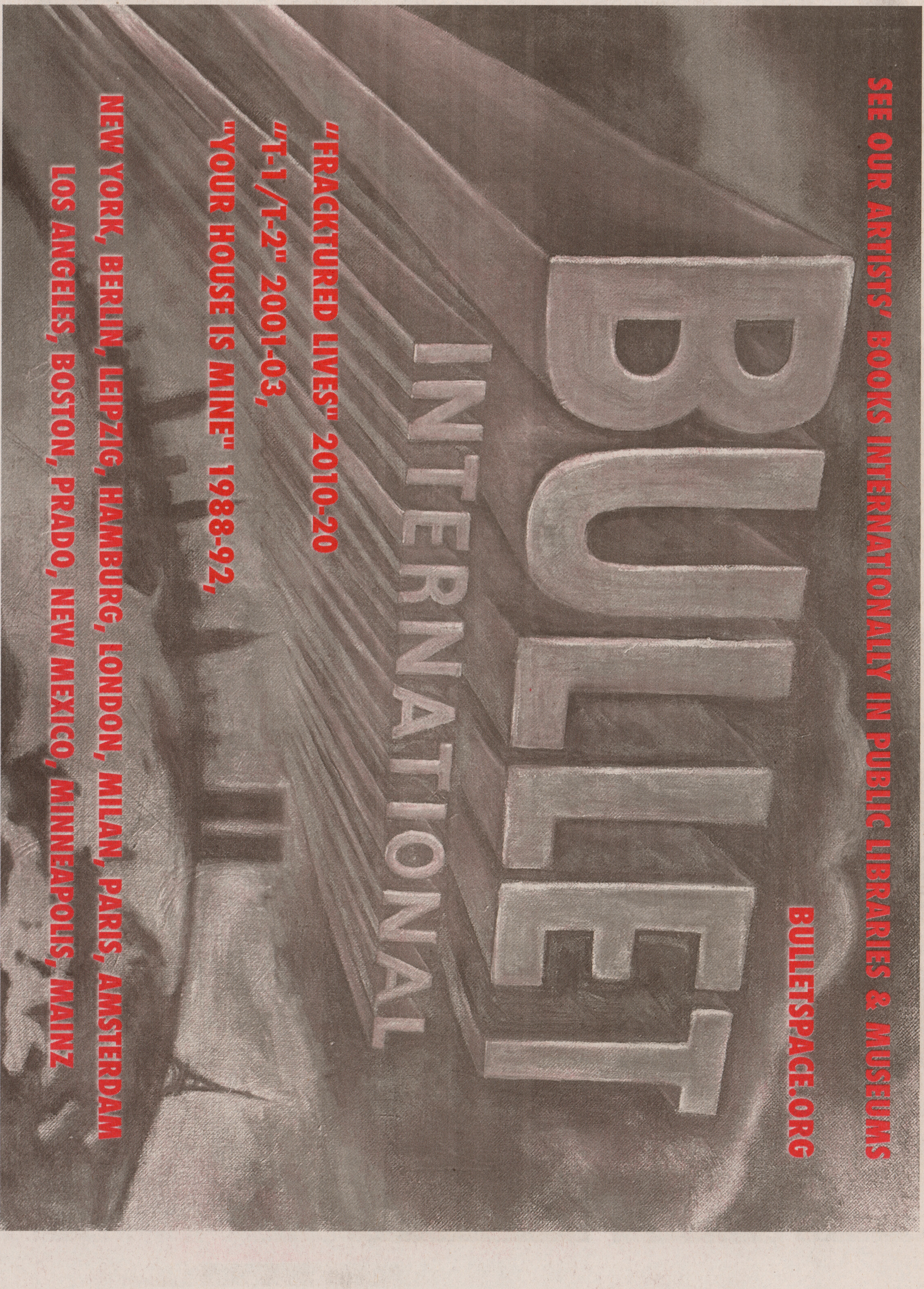

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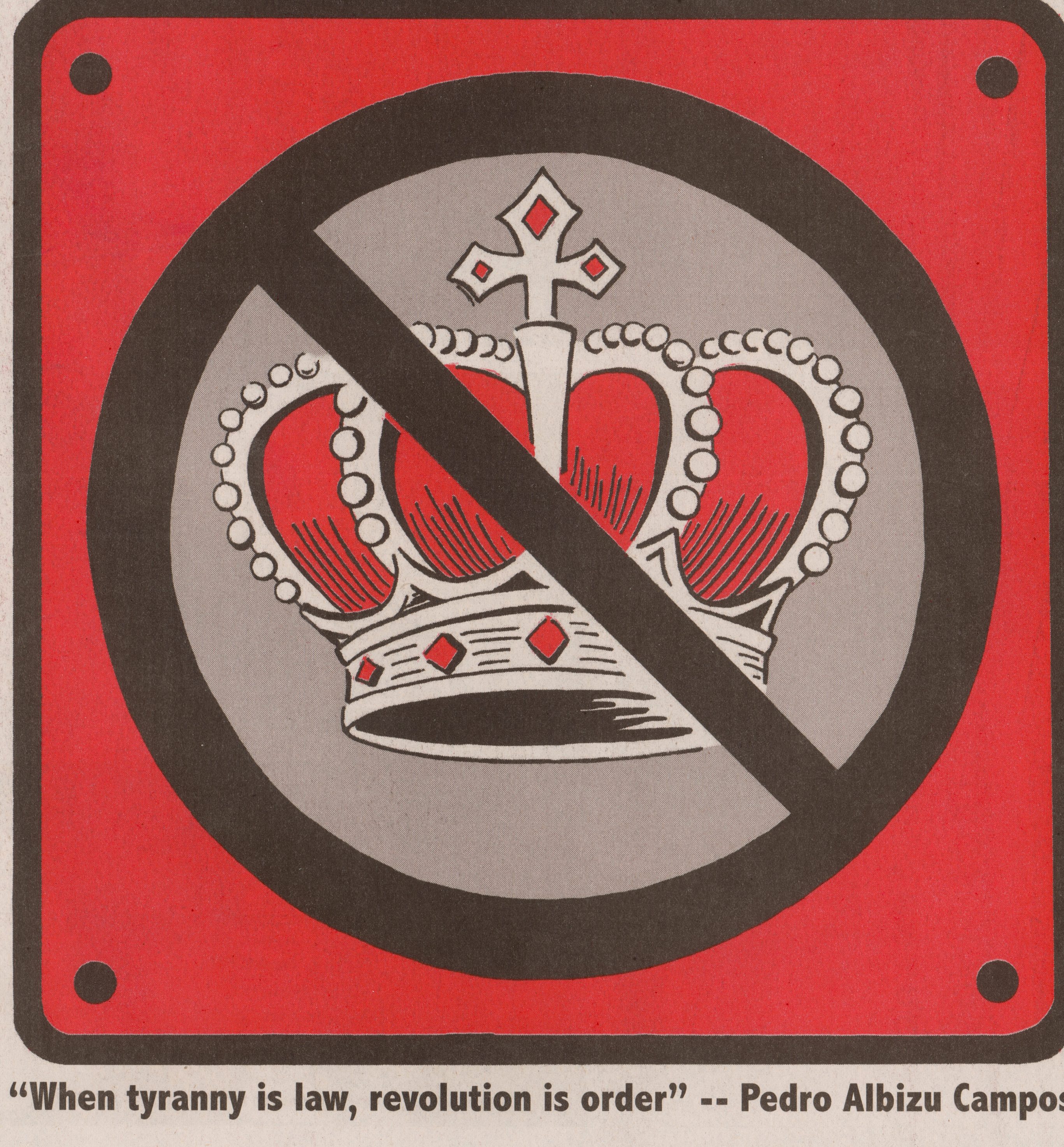

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